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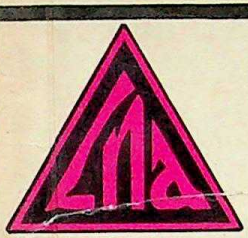
SHAKESPEARE'S



MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

Lahiri & Srivastava

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SHAKESPEARE

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

EDITED WITH

Critical Introduction, Text with Paraphrase, Scenewise Summary, Character-Sketches, Notes, Explanations, Questions and Answers, including Objective Type Questions, etc.

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Dated 4/11/2015

LAKSHMI NARAIN AGARWAL
EDUCATIONAL PUBLISHERS, AGRA-3

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Published by : **Lakshmi Narain Agarwal,**
Hospital Road, AGRA-3

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Price : Rs. 25·00 *Only*

Composed by : Rajput Composing House, Agra-4
Printed at : Sahgal Printing Press, Agra-3

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1. HISTORY OF THE ELIZABETHAN DRAMA

The story of the birth and early development of English drama is rather complicated, if traced in all its details. But the various stages and transitions through which it passed, can be clearly followed. Before the Norman conquest, there was no darma in English. It should be remembered that the bulk of Old English writings is overshadowed by the influence of Latin Christianity. The Latin Church had always feared the powerful appeal that drama made to the eye and ear—an appeal to the senses being a direct challenge to its spiritual authority. Since the decadence of the pagan drama of Rome, the Church has done nothing to encourage the stage. But strangely enough, the Mass in Latin Christianity was in reality a sacred drama—and contained at any rate dramatic possibilities. Thus, under the shadow of the Church drama rose again, phoenix-like, from its ashes.

First, on the continent as early as the tenth century, the clergy requisitioned the most elementary kind of dramatic representation—a sort of *tableau*—to bring home to the spectators the simple truths of Christianity. From the continent it passed over to England with the Normans. To this source may be traced the origin of both Miracle plays and Moralities. A distinction is made between *Miracles* and *Mysteries*. The Miracles are plays dealing with incidents in the lives of Saints and Martyrs. The mysteries are stories taken from the Scripture narratives. The Church services at Easter and Christmas, and particularly the responses in which the clergy and choristers took part, first showed the possibility of the dramatic representation of the truths of religion. While developments in this direction had been taking place, the Latin plays of Plautus and Terence were studied and imitated in the monasteries. Thus, Hrotsvitha, abbess of the Benedictine convent in Gandersheim (Eastphalia), wrote in the tenth century six Latin plays modelled on the comedies of Terence.

The earliest extant Miracles written probably by an Englishman, Hilarius, are three, composed about the time of Stephen. They are in Latin, with refrains in Old French. Not until the next century did plays begin to be written in the vernacular. But a lost Miracle on the subject of St. Katherine is referred to, and its performance might have taken place towards the end of the eleventh century. It was the work of a certain Geoffrey, settled at Denstable. By the later half of the twelfth century, these performances had become quite common.

The important point that should be noted, is that the earliest dramatic performances arose in this connection with the Church

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rituals, and were performed within the Church itself. The plays were written by the clerics and presented by the clerics. But for reasons which are stated below they gradually passed out of the hands of the clergy into those of the laity, from the Church into the churchyard and then into the street. Now, first, as the plays began to be popular, the over-crowding of the spectators led to the desecration of the graveyards. Secondly, the comic element and farce began to predominate over the religious element; and the clergy who took part in the performances, began to feel scandalized. Thirdly, the trade-guilds started celebrating the feasts of their patron-saints and began to perform mysteries on the occasion.

Outside the church, these plays were represented upon what were called pageants, *i. e.*, movable platforms, which were steered round the town, halting at different stations where the performances were repeated. The Council of Vienne in 1311 revived the feast of Corpus Christi, which had been instituted by Pope Urban IV, in 1264. This festival, falling usually in June, was observed by trade-guilds as a public holiday ; it was also absorbed into the dramatic *representations* of the day. The Christmas and Easter scenes, which were the original repertory, were now expanded until a complete cycle was formed, starting from the Creation and Fall of Man, dealing with the principal events in the life of Christ and terminating with the Judgment. Four such cycles have been preserved—the York, Towneley, Chester, and Coventry cycles.

The York cycle numbers forty-eight plays and dates from the middle of the fourteenth century. To different guilds were assigned different sets of plays : –

1. *Barkers*—(*i. e.*, Tanners), 'The Creation,' 'Fall of Lucifer.' 2. *Plasters*—'The Creation of the Fifty Day.' 3. *Cardmakers*—'God Creates Adam and Eve.' 4. *Fullers*—'Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden.' 5. *Coopers*—'Man's Disobedience and Fall.' 6. *Armourers*—'Adam and Eve driven from Eden.' 7. *Glovers*—'Sacrifice of Cain and Abel.' 8. *Shipwrights*—'Building of the Ark.' 9. *Fishers and Mariners*—'Noah and the Flood.' 10. *Parchmaners and Bookbinders*—'Abraham's Sacrifice.' 11. *Hosier*—'The Israelites in Egypt, the Ten Plagues and Passage of the Red Sea.' 12. *Spicers*—'Annunciation and Visit of Elizabeth to Mary,' and so on.

The Towneley or Wakefield cycle belongs to about the same date. They are thirty-two in number, and five of them correspond to five in the York cycle. The comic and realistic elements are more highly developed in these plays. A typical example is the farcical episode in the scene of the visit of the shepherds to Bethlehem - and we find how a certain Mak puts the simple shepherds to sleep by using a pell, steals a sheep and passes it off as a baby to which his wife Gyll has lately given birth, and that when Mak's fraud is discovered and commotion follows, an angel appears singing '*Gloria in Excelsis.*'

The Chester plays are twenty-five in number. They were acted at Whitsuntide instead of Corpus Christi. The Chester plays more

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than any other cycle kept the object of religious instruction steadily in view. The Coventry cycle numbers forty-two plays. They are connected with Coventry by a doubtful tradition, and they were performed by a company of strolling players. Abstract personifications are introduced in the Coventry plays; so there are such characters as Veritas Misericordia, Justiyia, Pax, etc. The Coventry plays are evidently of a later date, and the feature of abstract personifications links the cycle with the earlier Moralities.

These plays continued to be performed till the close of the sixteenth century. The last performance of the York plays was in 1579. We have mentioned the pageants above. The pageants may be described as a moving play-house. It was a high scaffold with two rooms, a higher and a lower, upon four wheels. This lower room served as the green room and the higher served as a stage, being all open on the top, so that spectators might hear and see everything. They played all along the street. Thus, they began first at the Abbey gates, and when the first pageant was played, it was wheeled to the High Cross before the Mayor, and then to every street. So every street had a pageant playing before it at one time, till the pageants appointed for the day had been played. At the end of the performance all the pageants in different streets assembled at one place.

The exact relation of the *Miracles* to the Shakespearean drama has been thus stated by Courthope: "They prepared the ground in the first place, by spreading a taste for theatrical exhibitions among; the people; in the second place, by furnishing opportunities, in many of the Scriptural scenes, for the direct imitation of human nature; and in the third place, by importing into the representations foreign materials and characters, which led to the invention of the plots beyond the range of Scripture invention. These early dramatists too furnished the hints for all the nameless, generic characters which figure so prominently in Shakespeare's plays. His first and second Citizens, Carriers, Gentlemen, and Soldiers have all of them prototypes in the pageants of the craftsmen: and from the familiar talk by which the actors helped the townfolk to realize, the Scripture narrative was generalized, the style made classical in the mouths of Bottom, Dogberry and Falstaff." There were other elements too, which influenced the later history of the drama—the pathetic situations in the scene between Abraham and Isaac and in the story of Christ the comic element in the character of Lucifer, developing later into the colour; the undramatic character of the bombastic Herod; the pastoral element in the scene of the annunciation to the shepherds, etc.

The Morality plays represent the intermediate stage between the Miracle play and the true drama. The Coventry cycle first introduced, as we have noted above, allegorical characters. The Moralities develop on this line. The oldest Morality play in England seems to have been what is called a *Paternoster* play, one of a cycle of seven plays, based upon the assumption that each of the seven clauses of the Lord's Prayer is directed against one of the Seven

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Deadly Sins. The play was performed at York, probably in the fourteenth century, and a guild was formed to ensure the regular performance of this cycle.

Of the Moralities of the fifteenth century, we have two examples—*Pride of Life* and *Castle of Perseverance*. In general interest and dramatic power the Moralities fall far below the Miracles. But there were advances in other respects. The Miracles drew their themes from the Scripture narrative, and therefore, had ready-made plots. But the writers of Moralities had to invent a plot, and try every ingenuity of construction to create interest, there being otherwise none in the allegorical characters themselves. Every possible source was used to make the shows interesting. Scene-painting, of course, of an elementary kind, was attended to, and dramatic 'properties' were freely introduced. A distinct advance was made towards unity of construction by grouping the incidents of the play round a central figure. In the attempt to individualize allegorical characters, some real characters were depicted under moral nicknames. The barrier was finally broken when actual historical or contemporaneous people were substituted for abstract virtues and vices—and so the form and substance of true drama gradually appeared.

The Miracle plays are not of great literary value. But much importance attaches to them—they popularized the desire for dramatic representation and especially by the intermingling of the comic element with the tragic, prepared the way for the romantic plays of Shakespeare. The Morality plays are more important in this respect. They appear first in the fifteenth century. They gradually develop into didactic interludes and other dramatic compositions. They advanced the dramatic art by making for individuality of characterization and realism of dialogue.

The next stage in the development of drama is the *Interlude*. The interlude differs from a Morality in dealing with secular and comic subjects, and may be said to anticipate the early form of comedy. With the performance of the interludes is connected an important feature of the Elizabethan drama. The interludes were acted by household-servants and retainers. This led to the custom, among the noblemen of wealth, of maintaining a band of more or less well-trained actors. So in the latter part of Elizabeth's reign, we find theatrical companies, attached to noblemen, *e. g.*, the Earl of Leicester's servants, the Queen's players, and so on.

The *Masque* is another form of dramatic art, which requires a brief notice here. The masque seems to have been in its origin merely a spectacle or pageant with a certain amount of pantomime thrown in. It has a dual character. Dancing and concerted movements made it resemble the modern ballet ; songs and dialogue made it resemble the modern opera.

In the development of English drama, we may trace three influences—(1) the native tradition ; (2) the Latin influence ; and (3) the Italian influence. In many of the works of the later Elizabethan

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playwrights, these three elements often blended. The Mystery and the Miracle, the Morality and the Interlude represent the development of the native tradition. From the latter two develop the rough farce and chronicle play, partaking of the nature of them both. The latter Elizabethan historical plays and the jesters and fools owe much to this development. So far as the development of the Latin influence is concerned, Seneca was taken as model in tragedy ; Plautus and Terence supplied the hinterland suggestions for comedy. Even the comical or farcical elements of older plays owe something to Plautus and Terence. Udall first wrote a comedy, thoroughly English in plot, incident, tone and dialogue, but followed the classical principles in construction. The Italian influence is marked in tragedies like Gascoigne's *Jocasta*, and Wheatstone's *Promos and Cassandra*, and in comedies such as Gascoigne's *Supposes*.

We may note here some examples of the early form of drama. The interludes, as we have pointed out above, discarded the abstract personifications of the Morality plays in favour of the living types Heywood made this innovation, and he might have been influenced by the contemporary French *sotie* or *force*. The names of some of Heywood's interludes are *A Play of Love*, the *Four P's*, *John the Husband, Tyb the Wife and Sir John the Priest* and *A Merry Play Between the Pardoner and the Friar, the Curate and the Neighbour Pratt*. They are all more or less realistic sketches. *The Four P's* will serve as a typical example. It has but a single incident and more dialogues. It is concerned with a dispute as to which of the three of the P's (Poticary, Pardoner and Palmer) can tell the biggest lie, the fourth P (Pedlar) being appointed judge. The Poticary begins by calling the Pedlar an honest man, but the Pedlar lets it pass, and bids them each tell (in the form of a narrative piece) a specimen lie. The Poticary tells the story of a marvellous cure. The Pardoner easily beats him by telling the story of the release of a woman's soul from hell, representing that the devil was too glad to get rid of the woman. The Palmer expresses his marvel at the story of the Pardoner, and protests in good humoured sarcasm that he has never seen any woman out of patience. He wins easily.

Nicholas Udall is the author of the first regular English comedy—*Ralph Roister Doister*. He followed Latin models. His play is divided into Acts and Scenes and is written in rhyming couplets ; the action is clearly developed, the dialogue is lively and the plot has some substance, and the *dramatis personae* are *live* characters. *Gammer Gurton's Needle*, traditionally attributed to Bishop John Still but now assigned to William Stevense, disputes the claim of being the first English comedy with *Ralph Roister Doister*. There is some fun in it. All the fuss is made about Gammer Gurton's loss of a needle. The action is rather farcical. There is one noted drinking song in it—*Back and side go bare, go bare*.

The first English tragedy, *Gorboduc* or *Ferrex and Porrex* was written by Sackville and Norton, and played early in 1562. The plot is this : "Gorboduc, King of Britain, divided his realm in his life-

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time between his sons, Ferrex and Porrex. The sons fell to dissension. The younger (Porrex) killed Ferrex. The mother (Videna), that more dearly loved the elder (Ferrex), for revenge, killed the younger. The people, moved with the cruelty of the fact, rose in rebellion, and slew both father and mother. The nobility assembled, suppressed the rebels, and afterwards, for want of issue of the prince, whereby the succession of crown became uncertain, they fell to civil war, etc." The play is divided into Acts and Scenes, and written for the most part in stiff blank verse. There is a dumb-show before each Act, foreshadowing what is next to appear on the stage, and a chorus in rhyming verse, ends the Act. The speeches are inordinately long. The atmosphere is one of unrelieved gloom. The only merit it possesses is the regularity of the plot and metre. The Latin models were followed in the tragedy as well as in the comedy. The comedy was founded upon Plautus ; the tragedy was founded upon Seneca. But in the subsequent developments of English drama the classical influence is to count far less than the native genius and tradition The *Jocasta* of Gascoigne needs mention here. Like *Gorboduc*, it followed the classical models,—and was written in blank verse, and had a chorus after the Act and a dumb-show before it. *Jocasta* was in itself an adaptation of Euripides' *Phoenessae*.

The later developments of English drama are to be traced through the works of the University Wits—scholars who were fostered under the atmosphere of either Oxford or Cambridge. Of the University Wits the following are the chief. George Peele of Oxford wrote *David* and *Bathsheba*, full of poetical beauties, and a court play, *The Arraignment of Paris*. Robert Green of Cambridge and then of Oxford, led a dissipated life and wrote plays and numerous pamphlets ; his best play, being *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*, the Margaret of which is almost worthy of Shakespeare's. He is chiefly remembered for his spiteful attack on Shakespeare in his pamphlet, *Groatsworth of Wit*. Thomas Lodge of Oxford wrote indifferent plays, with the exception of *The Looking Glass for London*, in which he collaborated with Greene. From his prose novel, *Rosalynde*, Shakespeare borrowed the plot of *As You Like It*. John Lyly of Oxford is hardly important as a dramatist. As the inventor of *Euphuism*, as set forth in his *Euphues : the Anatomy of Wit and Euphues and His England*, he had great influence on Shakespeare's development. The bastard Euphuism is ridiculed in Shakespeare's *Love's Labour's Lost*, but genuine Euphuism is more truly illustrated in the tongue-fence between Benedick and Beatrice in *Much Ado About Nothing*. Thomas Kyd lived and wrote as one of the set, though we are not sure that he was at either University. He produced two very popular plays, *Hieronymo* and its sequel *The Spanish Tragedy*, both alike full of blood-curdling horrors and vulgar rant. Yet here and there are passages of lofty poetry. The most important of the whole group and one who influenced Shakespeare's development most was Christopher Marlowe of Cambridge. His chief plays are *Tamburlaine*, *Doctor Faustus*, *The Jew of Malta* and *Edward II*. *Marlowe* was Shakespeare's predecessor. Shakespeare's *Richard III* was inspired by

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Marlowe's example, *Richard II* was influenced by Marlowe's *Edward II*. Marlowe's great merit lay in discovering and calling into life that blank verse which Shakespeare perfected. Marlowe, however, had no touch of humour and no sense of artistic proportion; in straining after the vast and awful, he sometimes degenerated into bombast. But a large proportion of his work has a force and poetic beauty, hardly surpassed by Shakespeare.

The work of the University Wits is thus summed up by Saintsbury, "In all we find the many sided activity of the Shakespearean drama, as it was to be, sprawling and struggling in a kind of swaddling clothes of which it cannot get rid and which hamper and cripple its movements. In all, there is present a most extraordinary and unique rant and bombast of expression which reminds one of the shrieks and yells of a band of healthy boys just let out to play. The passages which (thanks to Pistol's incomparable quotations and parodies of them) are known to everyone, are scattered broadcast in their originals, and are evidently meant quite seriously throughout the work of these poets. Side by side with this is another mania, foible of classical allusion. The heathen gods and goddesses, the localities of Greek and Roman poetry are put on the mouths of all the characters without the remotest attempt to consider propriety or relevance, on the other hand, the merits, though less evenly distributed in degree, are equally constant in kind. In Kyd, in Greene still more, in Peele more still, in Marlowe most of all, phrases and passages of blinding and dazzling poetry flash out of the mist of the bombast and the tedium.

Shakespeare belonged not to the University group, but to the rival set of actor-playwrights. Of the actor-playwrights who preceded Shakespeare, we know very little. They worked in groups, not individually, for the benefit of their respective companies. The work they contributed was the creation of drama, rather than of poetry. They made the characters and the plot develop each other, acting and reacting on each other as organic parts of a living whole, instead of using the plot as a peg on which to hang splendid speeches, or as in Marlowe's case, a more background to throw out in lurid light the hero's all-devouring egotism.

Of Shakespeare's contemporaries, four were especially connected with him by personalities, or by the character of their work—Ben Jonson, Chapman, Marston and Dekker. Ben Jonson made his name, (through Shakespeare's good offices, it is said) by *Everyman in his Humour*. He wrote many plays, the chief being his two Roman plays, *Sejanus* and *Catiline*, which are deficient in human interest. He had a keen eye for the characteristic foibles of men and women and a wide range of observation. His plays thus exhibit every variety of wit, subtle character-analysis, and knowledge of the world. Jonson's genius was too unsympathetic to make him a perfect master of the drama. His *dramatis personae* do not come home to our hearts as Shakespeare's do. George Chapman was a close friend of Jonson's and partly resembled him both in personal character and

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literary skill. His best comedy is *All Fools*, his best tragedy, *Busyd Ambois*. His dramatic work is far inferior to Jonson's, except in occasional passages. John Marston wrote several plays, the earliest and best being *Antonia and Mellida*, his best comedy, though based upon an improbable and unpleasant plot, is *What You Will*. In spite of blood-curdling bombast there are fine passages in his plays. Thomas Dekker, rather a hack writer, did a large amount of dramatic work, chiefly in collaboration with others. He approaches Shakespeare far nearer than any of his contemporaries in pathos and in the delineation of womanhood.

2. LIFE IN ELIZABETHAN ENGLAND

Two potent forces—the Renaissance and the Reformation—are to be reckoned with in estimating Elizabethan England. In England happily one was not opposed to the other—both the forces blended and co-operated. The Reformation in England tended to be *humanistic* and the Renaissance was not divorced from morality, as it was in Italy. A great uplifting of the spirit was produced by these two movements. In the first place the medieval obsession with death and the other world was replaced by the very joy of living. Secondly, intellectual curiosity, quest for knowledge unbounded and unexplored became the keynote of the age. Marlowe's *Tamburlaine* well expresses the spirit of the age :

"Nature that fram'd us of four elements
Warring within our breasts for regiment,
Doth teach us all to have aspiring minds :
Our souls, whose facilities can comprehend
The wondrous architecture of the world,
And measure every wandering planet's course,
Still climbing after knowledge infinite,
And always moving as the restless spheres
Will us to wear ourselves and never rest."

A sense of the unlimited potentialities of man must have been engendered by the Renaissance spirit when we find Shakespeare writing :

"What a piece of work is man ! How noble in reason ! How infinite in faculties, in form how moving ! How express and like a god ! The beauty of the world ! The paragon of animals !"

Believing in its own unlimited powers the man's soul was out—questing in both spiritual and material spheres. That is the meaning of the manifold energy and productivity of the Elizabethan age in music, poetry, drama, and not less in geographical discoveries and explorations. We might say that it was the spiritual fusion of the old and the new world that gave birth to the Renaissance—the old world of Greece and Rome, and the new world across the seas.

This is only one side of the picture. The Elizabethans lived in the full tide of life. Life and more life—and its aching joys and dizzy raptures held them fascinated. They aimed at draining the cup of life to the dregs. To exhaust all possibilities of life, material and spiritual, to enjoy all that life may yield, and to know all that life

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may mean—this goal the Elizabethans set before them. They had very sound views about education. No academic education would do for them. Education must be broad-based upon all the needs of human nature. Music on the one hand, proficiency in field-sports on the other, were parts of that education. Education too was directed towards increasing the range and power of enjoyment and self-expression, increasing the pleasures of the cultivated senses as well as of the cultivated mind.

Love of pomp and pageantry was a characteristic of the age. Queen Elizabeth delighted in fine and magnificent clothes. She insisted too that her courtiers should be richly dressed. Gifts of fine clothes were very commonly exchanged and highly appreciated. In Ben Jonson's *Every Man out of his Humour*, we find this a topic of the day ; " 't were good you turned four or five hundred acres of our best land into two or three trunks of apparel." Hentzner, a German who visited England in 1598, gives this picture of Queen Elizabeth going to Church on a Sunday. "That day she was dressed in white silk, bordered with pearls of the size of beans, and over it a mantle of black silk, shot with silver threads ; her train was very long, the end of it borne by a Marchioness ; instead of a chain, she had an oblong collar of gold and jewels." Of pageants and processions people seemed to have had no end. We have the description of the elaborate entertainments, given by the Earl of Leicester in honour of the Queen, at Kenilworth Castle. As a boy, Shakespeare might have witnessed the entertainments at Kenilworth. In this pageant, there was Triton in the likeness of a mermaid, and Proteus sitting on a dolphin's back. Within the body of this sham dolphin was hidden a band of musicians ; and, as usual, fireworks and rockets gave an additional glamour to the scene. Perhaps Shakespeare alludes to this pageant in his *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, II. ii :

> 'Once I sat upon a promontory,
> And heard a mermaid on a dolphin's back
> Uttering such dulcet and harmonious breath
> That the rude sea grew civil at her song,
> And certain stars shot madly from their spheres,
> To hear the sea-maid's music."

The age was distinctly and avowedly in favour of sensuous enjoyment, which the growing wealth of England enabled them to realize. William Harrison in his *Description of Britaine* (1567) has the following observation on the innovations that were brought about by the growing wealth of England :

"There are old men yet dwelling in the village where I remain who have noted three things to be marvellously altered in England within their sound remembrance ; and other things too much increased. One is the multitude of chimneys lately erected whereas in their young days there were not above two or three, if so many in most uplandish towns of the realm (the religious houses and manor places of their lords always excepted, and peradventure some great personages, but each one made his fire against a reredos in the hall, where he dined and dressed his meat). The second is the great

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(although not general) amendment of lodging ; for, said they, our fathers yea and we ourselves also have lain full oft upon straw pallets on rough mats covered on with a sheet under coverlets made of dogswain or hopharlots (I use their own terms) and a good round log under their heads instead of a bolster or pillow .. . pillows (said they) were though meant only for women in childbed.....The third thing they tell of is the exchange of vessels, as of treene (wooden) platters into pewter, and wooden spoons into silver or tin." New houses and new inns sprang up everywhere over the land. Visitors from foreign countries noted the prodigality of England in diet. Harrison says that many strange herbs, plants, annual fruits were daily brought into England from the Indies, the American colonies, Taprobane, Canary Isles and all parts of the world. The nobility of England, who employed French and foreign cooks, fed upon variety of dishes, preparations of different kinds of meat, beef, mutton, veal, lamb, kid, pork, cony, capon, pig, etc., and of different kinds of fish and wild fowl.

'Naval fights and naval enterprises and colonizations provided stirring times of which records have been left in Richard Hakluyt's book, *The Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques and Discoveries of the English Nation*. Piratical activities, often of the most daring and reckless kind, formed the principal part of the naval expeditions. But apart from these organized voyages, single individuals sometimes undertook extensive journeys not only through Europe but into the remote East. Echoes of the far sounding adventures occur in the literature of the time. Shakespeare makes Othello narrate his adventures to Desdemona, the best art, perhaps, of capturing the fancy of a young girl in those days. In *The Tempest* there is an allusion to the popular practice of travellers, in those days, of leaving their money with a merchant on condition that he might keep it if they failed to return but must pay it five-fold if they safely returned. Shakespeare's phrase, "putters out of five for one," has made this practice familiar to the reader.

"Travelling was also a part of education. For example, it was an ambition of the educated young Englishmen to visit Italy, the home of the Renaissance. Shakespeare in his days must have personally met many who had returned from Italy. His unerring touch in the description of Italian scenery and atmosphere—and even of minor details regarding such can be accounted for by his acquaintance with such travellers. The educated Elizabethans could speak several languages. Apart from classical learning which was diligently pursued, many in the course of their travels picked up French and Italian, and paraded their bits of learning. Thomas Wilson in his *System of Rhetoric* writes, 'Some far-journeyed gentlemen, at their return home, like as they love to go in foreign apparel, so they will powder their talk with over-sea language. He that cometh lately out of France will talk French-English and never blush at the matter. Another chops in with English Italianated, and applieth the Italian phrase to our English speaking.' Similarly, Ascham in his *Schoolmaster* speaks

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of the English Italianate as a devil incarnate, one who has adopted the vices of Italy and abandoned the virtues of his own country. Broad-based education, supplemented by travels, should have liberalized the mind and abolished superstitions and barbarous practice. But it did nothing of the kind. The existence of witches exercised a tyrannic spell upon the imagination of Elizabethans. The Statute against witches was passed in the very year of Shakespeare's birth, and stringently enforced in Elizabeth's reign, and re-enacted with severer penalties in the first year of James I. The penal code of the Elizabethan age was most brutal. 'Whippings, hangings, burnings, drownings, disembowellings, and mutilations were as common and apparently as attractive as bear-baiting and cock-fights. Carcasses on gibbets, traitors' heads on spikes, living felons with mutilated hands and ears must have made the counterfeit horrors of *Titus Andronicus* more amusing than painful to the average play-goer. Whipping was the mildest of punishments on shipboard. It seems to have been a superstition that to avert misfortunes the ship-boys should be regularly whipped whether or not they deserved it, a sacrifice to the malignant fates. Children were unmercifully beaten alike by their parents and teachers ; even a girl of royal blood and a model child, Lady Jane Grey, was cruelly punished, as Ascham relates, for the slightest fault."

Glimpses into the condition of the common folk in the Elizabethan era are few and between in the chronicles of the time. Harrison admits the superiority of the English husbandmen and artisans. He describes the skilful craftsmanship of the builders ; the excellence of the fruits and vegetables grown by the gardeners ; and the good breed of English cattle sheep. Trevelyan writes, "In the country-towns and villages where the industry as well as the agriculture of the country was carried on, a considerable proportion of the inhabitants were trained craftsmen. Apprenticeship was the key to the new national life almost as much as village had been to the old. The apprentice system was no longer left to local usage and municipal enforcement, but was controlled on a uniform national pattern for town and country by Elizabeth's Statute of Artificers which remained in force with little modification for over two hundred years. No man could set up as master or as workman till he had served his seven years' apprenticeship. In that way, the youth of the country obtained technical education and social discipline that went someway to compensate for the unfelt want of a universal system of school education. Youth was under control of a master, in some case until the age of twenty-four."

Traders and lawyers seemed to have had the best time of it. Harrison writes, "All the wealth of the land doth flow unto our common lawyers, of whom some one having practised little above 13 or 14 years, is able to buy a purchase of so many thousand pounds; which argueth that they wax rich apace, and will be richer if their clients become not the more wise and wary hereafter." The Elizabethans, it appears, were as ready to go to law as they were

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ready to fight. Shakespeare's knowledge of legal phrases and legal terminology cannot be anything but remarkable if this fact is remembered. The point was that the rich got richer and the poor got poorer. There was unemployment in the country-side in those days though the problem was not so acute as it is at present. Owing to unemployment there was a growing number of landless and masterless men, sturdy beggars, thieves and highwaymen who infested the common highways and made travelling unsafe. The Gadshill robbery in *Henry IV* is but a burlesque of the actual happenings in those days. The unemployed drifted mostly to London. They were chiefly soldiers and sailors disbanded from the wars in Ireland and the Low Countries, refugees and outlaws from abroad ; and they were armed with some kind of weapon from the primitive cudgel to the latest rapier. The street-quarrels of the Capulets and Montagues in *Romeo and Juliet* were probably a reproduction of scenes that Shakespeare had so often witnessed in the streets of London.

The Elizabethans had but a poor idea of sanitation. Travelyan writes, "Washing of clothes and person was much neglected especially in winter. Conveniences, which we consider necessities, did not exist. The death-rate even in upper class families was very heavy, and the poor only expected a slender proportion of their numerous progeny to survive. Medicine was in its infancy." London was frequently in the grip of epidemics. It was twice ravaged by plague in Shakespeare's life time. Consumption was quite common ; small-pox commoner still ; in the low-lying areas ague raged from year to year. "It is hard for us to realize that the abounding vitality and buoyancy of spirit which so amaze us in the Elizabethans co-existed with a state of public health in which disease almost unchecked scourged rich and poor alike."

It was an age of overflowing energy and spirit. Man sought to break away from the fetters of human body and social and political bondages to face the sun, to touch the sky, to reach the moon and to talk to the stars. The keynote of the age was "adventure". People revelled in bloodshed, murder, violence and vengeance on the one hand, and in bravery, heroism, chivalry and sacrifice on the other. Shakespeare describes the spirit of the age in *Hamlet* in the following pregnant passage :

> "What a piece of workis man ! How noble in reason ! how infinite in faculties, in form how moving ! how express and admirable in action ! how like an angel in apprehension, how like a god ! the beauty of the world ! the paragon of animals."

Naturally, therefore, we find that Shakespeare's comedies abound in chivalry romance, adventure and youth, and his tragedies are full of murders, bloodshed, vengeance, oppressions, atrocities and madness. This is what the age demanded and this is what Shakespeare bountifully supplied.

Art and literature can grow only in an atmosphere of peace,

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order and prosperity. The Elizabethan Age assured all the three requisites. In the world of religion, the long consuming controversy between Roman Catholicism and Anglicanism was settled and peace established. The reformation in religion had been accomplished and, therefore, perfect peace and calm prevailed in the country.

It was the age when trade and commerce of the country were also revolutionised. With the dissolution of monasteries there was a huge increase in the national wealth. The manufacture of glassware, pillows, cushions and carpets was newly introduced in the country. People were overjoyed to have such unprecedented and undreamt of comforts and luxuries.

It was also the age of great and glorious national victories. England defeated France and crushed the 'Invincible' Armada of Spain. A number of internal Dukes and Barons who had been revolting from time to time against the British sovereignty and claiming their independence, were all crushed. England enjoyed internal peace and order on the one hand, and on the other commanded foremost respect and influence over the continent. Tidal waves of nationalism flowed through the country. This accounts for so many historical plays written by Shakespeare. Songs of glory were sung in praise of England. Shakespeare speaks through the lips of Richard II :

This royal throne of kings, this sceptred isle,
This earth of majesty, this seat of Mars,
This other Eden, demi-paradise !
This happy breed of men, this little world,
This precious stone set in the silver sea !
This blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this England !

The narrow insular geographical boundaries were melting away and new islands and continents were discovered and added to the British empire, in quick succession.

The vast continent of America together with her rich gold mines was discovered and added to the dominion of England. Sailors returned with adventurous and fictitious tales of their meetings with fairies and demons and filled the English atmosphere with unprecedented thrill and magic. *The Tempest* may be cited as a direct outcome of this new spirit which had taken England in its grip.

Along with all these new discoveries and inventions, there also emerged above the mundane plane of the earth an intercourse with stars. Scholars were irresistibly drawn by the lore of the luminary heavenly bodies :

A star looks down at me
And says, "Here I and you
Stand, each in our degree
What do you mean to do"?

And the man replied, "I mean to conquer you." Stars were really conquered in the Elizabethan Age, revealing new mysteries of heaven and earth.

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With all these favourable conditions for the growth of arts and literature, there prevailed a vogue of classical studies and scholarship. The curiosity, excitement, wonder and imagination having been roused by the above factors, a literary shape was given to them by the supreme and perfect examples of great classical masters of Greece and Italy. In no time, England was turned into a vernal grove of sweet singing birds.

3. THE ELIZABETHAN STAGE-CONDITIONS

A play without an audience and actors is inconceivable. Therefore a dramatist has to adapt his plays to the conditions of the stage on which they have to be performed, to the actors who are to act them and to the audience who are to witness them. Shakespeare's dramas, accordingly, were greatly influenced by the conditions of the Elizabethan stage. The Elizabethan audience had no experience of the elaborate construction and decorations of the modern stage. Therefore, Shakespeare had to regulate his plays in accordance with the crude representation and limitations of the stage available in those primitive days.

Prior to the Elizabethan age, there was really speaking, no fixed stage in the sense we understand the term today. Although dramatic art had long established itself as an important profession in England, the stage was not yet fixed. There were strolling theatrical companies which carried their simple and crude stage from place to place. The stage was just a simple affair ; a kind of open tent with two side-doors, one serving for 'entrance' and the other for 'exit', with a small door in between the two serving the purpose of 'inner' stage. When Shakespeare arrived in London about 1585, the Elizabethan stage was in the state of final evolution.

There were three kinds of theatres in London when Shakespeare reached there : (i) Public theatres, (ii) Private theatres, (iii) the Halls of Royal Palaces and the Inns of Court. The Curtain, the Theatre and the Newington Butts were the three public theatres to which was added the Rose two years later (1587). They were either circular or octagonal in shape, with a raised dais in the centre. They were open overhead and performances took place in broad daylight. Shakespeare's plays were performed in all these theatres. Many of his plays were also performed in private theatres and at least a few in the Royal Palaces too.

It was in 1599 that the Globe Theatre in which Shakespeare himself had a share, was constructed. It became the permanent headquarters of the Shakespearean Theatrical Company. It was the most typical play-house of the Elizabethan age. An analysis of its structure can give us an idea of the common Elizabethan play-house. It was ciroular in structure and the inside yard was open to the sky. It was surrounded by three tiers of galleries overlooking the main stage in the centre. There was a circular area known as the 'pit' around the stage. There were no seats in the pit and, therefore, poor spectators, called the 'groundlings', kept standing

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throughout the performance. More fashionable and respectable spectators sat on seats arranged in the three galleries, one over the other. The uppermost gallery was covered with a thatched roof. The tickets varied from one penny in the 'pit' to 2s. 6d. in the highest gallery.

The stage proper was technically called the 'apron stage'. It comprised the following main parts : First, there was an outstretched rectangular platform. The 'groundlings' stood on three sides of it. Above it were thatched roof and hangings but no side or front curtains. In the floor was a hidden trap-door which was usually kept closed and through which occasionally ascended or descended ghosts and witches as in *Macbeth*. Secondly, at the back of the stage on either side there were two doors by which the characters entered and disappeared. Between the doors there used to be a small recess behind a thin curtain. The recess formed a kind of inner stage to present certain scenes as 'behind'. It represented, for example, the bedchamber of Desdemona, the cell of Prospero, the cave of King Lear or the tomb of Juliet. Thirdly, over the recess there was the upper stage or a balcony, technically called 'the heavens' which was used for 'tiring-house' or for representing upper scenes as the balcony of Juliet's bed-chamber, a curtain being hung from the balcony to conceal or disclose the 'recess' below.

The stage usually lacked in scenic arrangements. There was acute scarcity of scenery. Bradbrook writes : "The stage had properties but no scenery ; the trees of the popular orchard or woodland set, whether real or not, must have provided rather thin illusion, and this was certainly the most elaborate scene of the early stage. Spectacle replaced scenery." Among the properties of the stage a few typical things were a human head, a grave, a lion, an artificial moon, a bush or a flower plant which were so commonly required in Shakespeare's plays. The costumes of the actors were gaudy, rich and expensive. But they were all Elizabethan costumes irrespective of the period and country where the action of the drama was supposed to take place. Harrison says, "Shakespeare was no archaeologist ; as the medieval artists who gave us the wall-paintings and sculptures of our churches, represented Pilate's Roman soldiers in plate armour ; so his Romans in *Coriolanus* for example, carry pistols, are put in the stocks, say grace before meat and generally behave and look like the Elizabethans who watched them performed. Costume was a means of indicating rank and office more than time and place : it was meant to reveal the characters than the setting of the story."

Female actresses had not yet appeared on the stage. The parts of female characters were, therefore, played by young boys who appeared on the stage in foppish and gaudy female costumes. Considering the large number of female characters in Shakespeare's plays, it may be safely inferred that young men must have played the female roles perfectly in the Elizabethan age. Yet in order to compensate for the absence of actresses, Shakespeare often contrived to represent his heroines in comedies disguised as men. Instances may be cited

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from his comedies—Portia playing the part of the judge, Rosalind visiting her lover as a young shepherd, and Viola serving as the boy-messenger of Duke Orsino. In addition to this, Shakespeare also avoided very intimate or passionate scenes of love lest they should arouse ridicule. Granville Barker observes: "There is, when one comes to examine the point, quite extraordinarily little intimate love-making in Shakespeare. How often, that is how seldom, do we want to insert the stage direction 'they kiss ?' It will be found, I think, that Shakespeare almost always interposes some sort of barrier as the balcony in *Romeo and Juliet* or an intellectual barrier, as with Beatrice and Benedick, who are always at wit's rapier's distance and so on. Also, as a minor point, Shakespeare uses circumstances for occasional effect as when Cleopatra thinks of a squeaking Cleopatra buoying her greatness, or Rosalind delivers an epilogue much of which is pointless on the modern stage."

Flexibility was a chief characteristic of the Elizabethan stage. This flexibility was at once an invitation to licence. Time and place could be neglected or telescoped to serve a dramatic purpose. The Elizabethan stage was free from any suggestions of particular locality or time. Bradbrook writes, "The unlocalized dreams allowed Shakespeare to indulge in loose flowing construction, episodic plots, and complex action. It is responsible for most of those features of his plays which appeared to be faults to the eighteenth century, and for the fact that he was largely unplayable in the nineteenth century. This vagueness of place may have been encouraged by the frequency with which allegorical figures were allowed to move on the same plane as a human being in the plays, which confused the sense of time and place." To the audience, the stage was stage—it represented nowhere and, therefore, everywhere.

The absence of scenery had far-reaching effects on the construction and style of Shakespeare's plays. The absence of scenery led Shakespeare to have comparatively short scenes which could be quickly changed. It put a great limitation upon the ways in which a Shakespearean scene or act could terminate. The drop-curtains were unknown in the Elizabethan age. Therefore at the end of each scene the actors had either to walk away or were carried off the stage, leaving it empty. For this reason an Elizabethan scene or Act could not end on a climax. Even the most overwhelming scenes of Shakespeare close relatively quietly and the stage is usually cleared at the close of each scene. Another method of indicating the close of a Shakespearean scene was the use of a rhyming couplet at the end. The rhymed couplet was believed to ring the death-knell of the scene or the act.

The lack of scenic effect was made good by the poet by gorgeous descriptions and graphic effects of poetry. Had there been elaborate scenery on the Elizabethan stage, we would have missed much of the rich descriptive poetry of Shakespeare. The actors had to use highly emotional and exalted poetry in order to arouse the emotions of the spectators. With a view that this kind of poetic style

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may not look incongruous in the day-to-day world, Shakespeare has taken care to place his scenes in far-off lands like Venice or Sicily or in the land of his own imagination haunted by angels and fairies as in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. The wonderful poetry of Shakespeare "caused him to make up for the deficiency of the scenery by his wonderful descriptions of landscapes, castles and wild moors. All that poetry would have been lost had he painted scenery at his disposal."

All these peculiarities of the stage and its limitations had marked influences on the structure, action and even style of Shakespeare's dramas. Shakespeare wrote his plays primarily for the stage. Ben Jonson rightly hailed him as "the applause, delight, the wonder of our stage." Thomas Carlyle regretted that Shakespeare's dramatic skill had to be curbed down to the limitations of the Globe Theatre : "his great soul had to crush itself, as it could, into that and no other mould."

4. ELIZABETHAN AUDIENCE

"The drama's rules the drama's patrons give." In other words, the audience, which is the real 'patron' of the drama goes a long way in determining the form and spirit of drama. In order to enter into the spirit of Shakespeare's dramatic art, it is essential, therefore, to understand the nature and characteristics of the audience for which Shakespeare wrote his dramas.

The Elizabethan audience for which Shakespeare wrote his plays was of a most heterogeneous kind. It comprised two distinct classes of people whom we may conveniently characterize as the 'vulgar' and the 'refined'. To the former class belonged all sorts of vulgar and uncultured people like sailors, soldiers, thieves, pickpockets, cheats and immoral men and women. The other part of the audience comprised educated men and women, respectable businessmen and public officers, critics and scholars, and at times, members of royal families. Shakespeare and all other contemporary playwrights had to cater to the tastes of both the classes.

It was the class of 'the vulgar' which formed the bulk of the audience in public theatres. They generally stood in the pit round the stage or sat in the gallery above. They were the most noisy persons of whom even the actors were afraid. Brandes gives a very lively description of this class of audience in the following words: "The frequenters of the pit, with their coarse boisterousness, were the terror of the actors. They all had to stand, coal-heavers and bricklayers, dock-labourers, serving men and idlers. Refreshment-sellers moved about among them, supplying them with sausages and with apples and nuts. They ate and drank, drew corks, smoked tobacco, fought with each other, and often when they were out of humour threw fragments of food and even stones at the actors. Now and then they would come to loggerheads with fine gentlemen on the stage, so that the performance had to be interrupted and the theatre closed. The sanitary arrangements were of the most primitive description, and the groundings resisted all attempts at reform on the

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part of the management. When the evil smells became intolerable, juniper berrief were burnt by way of refershing the atomosphere."

The refined gentry usually sat on chairs close to the stage and sometimes upon the stage itself. There were special boxes for very high officials and public men. Ladies usually came with silken masks drawn over their faces. Foppish and very fashionable ladies generally occupied the first row. But the Elizabethan theatre was usually a scene of most boisterous actions and obscene remarks; and, therefore, highly respectable ladies did not usually visit 'public' theatres. There were 'private' theatres to cater to the demand of this class of the Elizabethan audience.

The Elizabethan audience, in general, revelled in boisterous scenes of murders, bloodshed, vengeance, oppressions, and atrocities. They patronized what we call melodramatic plays. This explains the recurrence of too many melodramatic scenes in Shakespeare's tragedies. The ingratitude of Macbeth, the frailty of Hamlet's mother, the suspicious nature of Othello, the inhumanity of Regan and Goneril and so many other scenes of murder, bloodshed and battles, were not repulsive to most of the Elizabethan audience. The Elizabethans rather delighted in them. They highly appreciated Marlowe's *Tamberlaine* which is nothing but a long succession of inhuman murders and battles.

Thus theatres were very much in vogue in the Elizabethan England. For the spectators, in general, theatres were not merely places of amusement and entertainment but also of social gathering and instruction. The theatres served the purpose of newspapers, magazines and journals. The Elizabethan dramas, being the mirror of the age, exhibited to the public what was going on in England and abroad. What Francis Bacon said of 'Studies', he might well have said of the dramas of his age, as serving "for delight, for ornament and for ability."

5. LIFE OF SHAKESPEARE

Shakespeare at Stratford

The following entry in the register of baptism is relied upon in fixing Shakespeare's birth approximately:

"1564, April 26, Gulielmus Filius Johannes Shakespeare"
[William son (of) John Shakespeare]

The practice was to baptize the child within a few days of its birth; so 23rd April is conventionally fixed as Shakespeare's birthday.

His birthplace was Stratford-on-Avon in Warwickshire. Round the town there are more or less distant hills, and the view of it from the nearest, the Welcombe Hills, shows the town nestling in the broad valley.

His father, John Shakespeare, appears to have been a glover. He was besides a corn-dealer or farmer, and trader in all kinds of agricultural products. William Shakspeare was the first son and third child of John Shakespeare and of Mary Arden, daughter of a husbandman and landowner. John Shakespeare prospered in worldly life till he rose to be the Mayor of Stratford, and then its chief alderman,—and thus he gained a coat of arms as a gentleman.

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It is usually held that Shakespeare went to the free Stratford Grammar School at the age of seven and stayed there till he was fourteen or sixteen at the latest, when he picked up his "little Latin and less Greek" If his picture of the whining schoolboy, with his satchel and shining-morning face, creeping like snail unwillingly to school be not impersonal, then we may suppose that Shakespeare was at some school, and had written the above account from his personal experience. There are frequent references to school-day's pranks in his plays. "The blessed son of heaven prove a micher (*truant*), and eat black-berries ?" (I *Henry IV*, II. iv). It is pleasing to the fancy to imagine that Shakespeare had his full quota of a schoolboy's experience and pranks. He must have gone bird's-nesting and joined in Mayday, Chirstmas, and New Year's games; helped make hay, gone to harvest-homes and sheep shearings (*Winter's Tale*, IV. iii), fished (*Much ado*, III.i), ran out with the harries (*Venus and Adonis*, st. 113-118,), and loved a dog and horse (*Venus and Adonis*, st. 44-52 ; *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, IV. i; *Richard* II, V. v. ; I *Henry IV*, IV. i, etc.) as dearly as every boy in England did.

Lately Professor J. D. Wilson (*The Essential Shakespeare*, p. 41) has questioned the Grammar School education of Shakespeare, and imagines that, Shakespeare's father being an ardent Catholic, the boy might have received his education as a singing-boy in the service of some great Catholic nobleman, which explains how he became an actor.

Now, whether Shakespeare had any schooling or not, he seems to have had a keen and alert mind which amassed a rich store of learning, quaint and miscellaneous. Lowell writes, "What kind of culture Shakespeare had is uncertain : how much he had is disputed ; that he had as much as he wanted, and of whetever kind he wanted must be clear to whoever considers the questions."

John Shakespeare later appears to have fallen on evil days and his son was consequently withdrawn from school. What Shakespeare did after he had left school is uncertain, and must be left to the fancy of every reader. It is variously stated that he we for some time a schoolmaster in the country, that he was apprenticed to a butcher, that he was apprenticed to his father. All that we can be certain of is that he stayed for some time longer at Stratford, that he noted the many rural scenes around him, took stock of the wild flowers and the birds, and learnt much of the lore of dogs and horses which he displays in his works. His frequent references to sports, hawking, coursing and hunting, make us believe that he must have seen all of these frequently and probably may have indulged in them personally,

It is on record that Shakespeare at the age of eighteen was married to Anne Hathaway, his senior by eight years, by special licence on November 28, 1582, and the issue of the marriage, Susanna, a daughter, was baptized on May 26, 1583. His twins—Hamnet and Judith were baptized on February 2, 1585. Thus, when he was hardly twenty-one he was burdned with three children and a wife eight years older than himself ; and it is believed that he must have been much worried about them,

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Whether his marriage was a happy one, must remain an open question. Shakespeare, of course, dwells on the incongruity of a woman marrying one younger than herself in *The Twelfth Night*, II.iv, of the disdain and discord which grow through such incompatible union in the *Tempest*, IV. i, of a wife's jealousy in the *Comedy of Errors*, V. i. But the inference must be left to every reader as it pleases him. J. D. Wilson asserts, "In any case—to nail one more slander to the counter—there is no ground whatever for imagining that his married life was an unhappy one, which is not the same thing as saying that he himself was a model husband."

His domestic entanglement might have been the reason for his abruptly leaving Stratford to seek his fortune elsewhere. Tradition gives a different cause, that Shakespeare joined some wild young fellows in breaking into Sir Thomas Lucy's park at Charlecote, about three miles from Stratford, and stealing his deer, for which, and for writing an awfully bad ballad against Sir Thomas, the latter so persecuted the poet that he had to leave Stratford. But it is all uncertain. It is, however, generally supposed, though without any sure ground, that Shakespeare left Stratford in or about 1586. "The Queen's Players" paid a visit to Stratford in 1587. It is said by some that this was probably the turning-point in Shakespeare's life. At any rate, sooner or later, he left his birth-town for London, and took the way to fame and fortune.

Shakespeare in London

The legend that Shakespeare, on his first appearance in London, employed himself in holding horses outside theatre doors, or worked in a printer's or lawyer's office, is now discredited. The earliest notice of Shakespeare in London occurs in 1592 in the death-bed effusion of Robert Greene—*A Groatsworth of Wit bought with Million of Repentance*, in which Shakespeare is referred to as "an upstart crow, beautified with our feathers" and as "Johannes factotum." Henry Chettle, who edited Greene's pamphlet, makes a nice apology to Shakespeare. It may be inferred from Greene's illnatured allusion that Shakespeare must have been actively engaged in writing plays by 1592, that some at least of them were based upon the work of other men.

The playhouse with which tradition connects Shakespeare was called "The Theatre," built by a player and joiner, James Burbage in 1577, in the fields outside the City Walls, on the west of Bishopsgate Street, in Shoreditch. In 1598 it was pulled down and in 1599 rebuilt as "The Globe," on Bankside Southwark.

The records of Shakespeare's life and career henceforth are fairly continuous. Not long after he found a patron in Henry Wriothesley, Earl of Southampton. In 1596, he seems to have been well off enough to apply for a coat-of-arms. On August 11, 1596, Shakespeare's only son, Hamnet, died, and was buried at Stratford. His son's death must have been a great blow to Shakespeare, wishing as he did to found a family. Now he seems to have been growing rich. In 1597 he bought for £60 the largest dwelling house in his native

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town, New Place, and later he made further investment in land in the neighbourhood. When "The Theatre" was rebuilt as the "Globe", Shakespeare was taken in as a partner—"a fellowship in a cry of players".—(*Hamlet*, III, ii.) The admission as a partner into the profits of the *New Globe* marks definitely his success in London better than his purchase of New Place at Stratford.

In the beginning of the year 1601, Essex's rebellion broke out and, for his share in it, Lord Southampton was imprisoned in the Tower whence he was not released until James I's accession in 1603. Shakespeare's fortunes thus suffered a temporary eclipse. On March 24, 1603, Queen Elizabeth died, and as Chettle complains, "the silver-tongued Melicent" (Shakespeare) did not "drop from his honied Muse one sable tear." On James' accession, Shakespeare's company, entitled "The Lord Chamberlain's Company", originally entitled, "The Lord Chamberlain's Servants" assumed the title of "The King's Players".

Shakespeare at Stratford Again

Shakespeare's life in London is an unbroken record of success and growing prosperity. "The rest of his story, so far as it can be read in the records, is one of continued good fortune. In the worldly sense, at least, Shakespeare had become, and remained till his death, a prosperous and wealthy man. The numerous documentary references to him that have come down to us are mainly concerned with property bought, money sued for in the courts, or his plays which were acted or published."

In or about 1609, after the period of his great tragedies, Shakespeare is supposed to have left London for Stratford. "There is nothing definite to fix the change to any one year ; but the internal evidence of his plays and sonnets, as well as the fact that he must, before he made his will, have sold or released to his partners all his interest in the Globe and Blackfriar's profits and in his plays, almost obliges us to conclude that his leaving town dates from 1609 or thereabouts." Since his retirement to Stratford he seems to have come to London once, suing for the recovery of his share in the tithes which he had bought in 1605, and to have purchased a house and a piece of ground near the Blackfriar's Theatre. The Blackfriar's House was part of a large property belonging to the Bacon family, and when this was cut up and sold, Bacon's widow Anne (mother of the great Francis Bacon) retained the title-deeds. On April 26, 1615, Shakespeare associated himself with his fellow-buyers in a Bill of Complaint to recover the title-deeds, and the widow's heir, Matthew Bacon, was ordered by the Lord Chancellor to bring the deeds to court.

Having executed his will on March 25, Shakespeare died at New Place, on April 23, 1616, and was buried in the chancel of Stratford Church on the 25th. The only report as to the cause of his death is in the Diary (printed in 1839) of the Rev. John Ward who was appointed Vicar of Stratford in 1662, that "Shakespeare, Drayton, and Ben Jonson had a merie meeting, and it seems drank too hard. for Shakespeare died of a fervour there contracted."

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6. CHRONOLOGY OF CHIEF EVENTS IN SHAKESPEARE'S LIFE

1564 April 26, Shakespeare baptized.

1571 At the age of seven, according to the custom of the time, Shakespeare's school-life probably began.

1575 Queen Elizabeth visited the Earl of Leicester at Kenilworth, Shakespeare's father might have taken him to witness the Kenilworth festivities—(*Midsummer Night's Dream*, II, iii).

1578 Shakespeare left school. His father's fortunes at a low ebb.

1582 Shakespeare married Anne Hathaway.

1583 May 26, Shakespeare's daughter, Susanna baptized.

1585 February 2, Shakespeare's twin children, Hamnet and Judith, baptized.

1586 Shakespeare left Stratford.

1592 Shakespeare referred to in Greene's *Groatsworth of Wit*.

1593 *Venus and Adonis* published and dedicated to Southampton.

1594 *Titus Andronicus* acted by the Earl of Sussex's men.

1596 August 11. Shakespeare's son, Hamnet buried.

1597 May 4. Shakespeare bought New Place.

1598 Francis Mere's *Palladis Tamia* published, which contained a list of Shakespeare's plays up-to-date in a chronological order. Shakespeare acted in Ben Jonson's *Every Man in his Humour*.

1599 Shakespeare purchased shares in the *Globe*.

1601 Essex executed, and Southampton imprisoned. John Shakespeare buried.

1602 May 1. Shakespeare purchased one hundred and seven acres of arable land which he added to New Place.

1603 February 2. Shakespeare's company performed before the Queen at Richmond.

1604 March 15. Shakespeare took part in the procession on the occasion of James' entry.

1607 Susanna married John Hill.

1608 September 9. Susanna's mother buried. Shakespeare established himself at New Place.

1609 *Sonnets* published.

1613 *The Tempest* performed at the festivities in celebration of the marriage of Princess Elizabeth with the Elector Frederick. The *Globe* burnt down.

1616 January 25. Shakespeare made his will, not signed till March 25.

April 23. Died.

April 25. Buried in the Chancel of Stratford Church.

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7. CHRONOLOGY OF SHAKESPEARE'S PLAYS

Evidence—External and Internal.

External evidence consists of : (1) Entries of Poems and Plays, before or on publication by publishers, in the *Registers* of the Stationers' Company incorporated by Queen Mary in 1557. (2) The publications of the Poems and Plays. (3) Allusions in contemporary books, diaries, letters, etc.

The *Stationers' Registers*, and publication establish the dates of two Poems and six Plays, all printed in Shakespeare's lifetime, except *As You Like It* which is mentioned in the *Stationers' Registers*, and of which the date can be conjectured to be 1600.

Below is given the table of results :

Venus and Adonis entered and published in 1593;
Lucrece entered in 1594;
I Henry IV entered in 1597 and published in 1598.
Much Ado entered in 1600.
Hamlet entered in 1602, published in 1603–04.
King Lear entered in 1607, published in 1608.
Pericles entered in 1601, published in 1609.

Allusions in contemporary books, etc., give the dates of five plays : *Romeo and Juliet*, before 1595; *Julius Caesar*, 1601 ; *Twelfth Night*, February 1602; *Winter's Tale*, 1611; *Henry VIII*, 1613.

The books and diaries which supply the dates are as follows : Weever's Sonnet in his *Epigrammes*, 1595 ; for *Romeo and Juliet*; Weever's *Mirror of Martyrs*, 1601, for *Julius Caesar* ; Manningham's *Diary*, Feb. 2, 1601-02,for *Twelfth Night* ; Dr. Forman's *Diary*, for *Winter's Tale*, 1611; (1) Thomas Lorkin's letter to Sir Thomas Puckering, dated "London, this last day of June, 1613", and (2) John Chamberlaine's letter to Sir Ralph Winwood, dated London, 8th July, 1613, both of which refer to the burining of *The Globe* or *The Playhouse*, during the performance of *Henry VIII*.

Internal evidence consists of allusions in the plays to past or contemporary events, and also relies upon the style and temper of the works. Allusions in the plays to contemporary events suggest positively the date of one play, *Henry V*. The Prologue to Act V refers to the Earl of Essex :

"Now the general of our gracious Empress,
As in good time he may from Ireland coming,
Bringing rebellion broached on his sword,
How many would the peaceful city quit,
To welcome him !"

The Prologue to Act I refers to the newly-built wooden "O" or Globe Theatre, opened in 1599 :—

"Can this cockpit hold,
The vasty fields of France ? or may we cram,
Within this wooden O, the very casques,
That did affright the air at Agincourt ?"

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The reference to the great earthquake of April 6, 1580, in *Romeo and Juliet* helps to determine its date :—

"Come Lammas-eve at night shall she be fourteen.
Susan and she—God rest all Christian souls :
Were of an age : well, Susan is with God ;
She was too good for me : but, as I said,
On Lammas-eve at night shall she be fourteen :
That shall she, marry ; I remember it well,
'Tis since the earthquake now eleven years."

This gives either 1591 or 1593 for the date of the play.

For the rest of Shakespeare's plays, *i. e.*, twenty-six out of thirty seven plays, we have to depend on the style and temper of the works. First, we may take the evidence of metre. If we compare *The Comedy of Errors*, an earlier play, with *The Winter's Tale*, we may deduce the following results : In the *Errors* the *end-stopped* lines, *i. e.*, with a pause at the end are a marked feature but in *The Winter's Tale*, the lines are *run-on* (*i. e.*, the sense is carried from one line to the next) with a fair proportion of weak or light endings which help the process, and varied central pauses—thus the lines in the *Errors* are stiff and formal, while in *The Winter's Tale* they have the ease and freedom of natural talk. Further, in the *Errors*, lines are regular—five iambic feet, but in *The Winter's Tale* there is sometimes an extra or eleventh syllable or even a twelfth syllable. The results may be thus tabulated :

(*i*) Run-on lines in the *Errors* : 1 in 7·66
The Winter's Tale 1 in 2·3.
(*ii*) Extra-syllables in the *Errors* : *nil*
The Winter's Tale : 1 in 1·75.
(*iii*) Weak endings in the *Errors* : *nil*
The Winter's Tale : 1 in 4·2.

The proportion of rhyming lines is another test, *Love's Labour's Lost*, a very early play may be compared with the latest plays, *The Tempest* and *The Winter's Tale*.

Love's Labour's Lost.....1,028 rhymes to 579 blanks or 1 to ·56.

The Tempest .....2 rhymes to 1,458 blanks or 1 to 779.

The Winter's Tale ..... 0 rhyme, to 1,825 blanks or 1 to infinity.

So we may compare the proportion of *run-on* to end-stopped lines in three of the earliest and latest plays.

Earliest Plays :—
Love's Labour's Lost.....1 in 18·14.
The Comedy of Errors .....1 in 10·7.
The Two Gentlemen of Verona... .....1 in 10.

Latest Plays :—
The Tempest.....1 in 3·02.
Cymbeline.....1 in 2·52.
The Winter's Tale.....1 in 2·12.

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Dowden, in his *Growth of Shakespeare's Mind and Art*, thus sums up the characteristics of Shakespeare's early plays—(*i*) frequency of rhyme in various arrangements ; (*ii*) occurrence of rhymed doggerel verse ; (*iii*) comparative infrequency of feminine or double ending or weak ending, of unstopped line ; (*iv*) regular internal structure of the line ; (*v*) frequency of classical allusions ; (*vi*) frequency of puns and conceits ; (*vii*) wit and imagery drawn out in detail to the point of exhaustion ; (*viii*) clowns, who are, by comparison with the later comic characters, outstanding persons in the play, told off specially for clownage ; (*ix*) the presence of termagant or shrewish women ; (*x*) soliloquies addressed rather to the audience (to explain the speaker's self) ; (*xi*) symmetry in the grouping of persons.

Now, proceeding from Shakespear's early to latter plays, we can trace the changes in style and metre which marked the progress of Shakespeare's mind and spirit. He soon gave up the doggerel, the excessive word-play, the quip and crank of his early plays, their puns, conceits and occasional bombast ; he curbed his exuberant fancy by the control of the higher imagination and poetic creation ; he subdued the rhetoric of his historical plays ; he exchanged the playfulness of fancy, the verbal ingenuity, the farce of the early plays for the death struggle of the passions, the terror of his tragedies, laying bare the innermost recesses of the human soul ; and then passed serene and tender, to the pastorals and romances of his later age.

A Note on Folio and Quarto : The term *folio* is applied to a book, the pages of which are formed by a sheet of paper folded once, and the team *quarto*, to a book the pages of which are formed by a sheet of paper folded twice. All the plays of Shakespeare except *Pericles* were issued in Folio (known as the first Folio), in 1623 by his friends and fellow-actors, John Heminge and Henry Condell, and dedicated to the Earls of Pembroke and of Montgomery. Only seventeen of Shakespeare's plays were printed in Quarto during his lifetime. The first Folio is of great value, as it is, in some instances, more correct than quartos, and contains seventeen plays, of which no quarto editions, exist. The second Folio appeared in 1632, the third in 1663-64, the fourth in 1685. Single plays appeared in Quarto form during Shakespeare's lifetime and throughout a large part of the seventeeth century.

8. CLASSIFICATION OF SHAKESPEARE'S PLAYS IN THE FOLIO OF 1629

Histories

Henry VI, Richard III, Richard II, King John, Henry IV (Parts I and II), Henry V, Henry VIII.

Tragedies

Titus Andronicus, Romeo and Juliet, Julius Ceasar, Hamlet, Othello, King Lear, Macbeth, Antony and Cleopatra, Coriolanus, Cymbeline, Timon of Athens.

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Comedies

Love's Labour's Lost, Comedy of Errors, Two Gentlemen of Verona, Midsummer Night's Dream, Merchant of Venice, Taming of the Shrew, Merry Wives of Windsor, Much Ado About Nothing, As You Like it, Twelfth Night, All's Well that Ends Well, Measure for Measure, Troilus and Cressida, Winter's Tale, Tempest.

9. DEVELOPMENT OF SHAKESPEARE'S DRAMATIC ART

FIRST PERIOD

The following plays belong to the First Period (1587–1594 ?).

Love's Labour's Lost, The Comedy of Errors, Midsummer Night's Dream, Two Gentlemen of Verona, Romeo and Juliet (with the poems of *Venus and Adonis and Lucrece*, and probably the Troilus part of *Troilus and Cressida*), *Richard II, 1, 2, and 3, Henry VI and Richard III.*

In the first period, Shakespeare served his dramatic apprenticeship. In the earliest of his plays he shows an extraordinary facility in expression and a rare gift of phrasing which ever distinguished his work. But the verse form with the practice of rhyming and five rigid iambic feet did not make far appropriate dramatic expression. Even when rhyme was not used, the verse seemed to be crude and strained.

The use of Blank Verse by Marlowe in *Tamburlaine* (1587) opened a new era in dramatic composition. The possibilities of blank verse were but partly revealed by Marlowe in his creation of glowing forms and gorgeous scenes, inspired by the stirring events and great stories of danger or discovery of Elizabethan days. Shakespeare saw his opportunity. From blank verse he drew music and colour myraid-toned and myraid-tinted. He could express through its medium the delicate beauty of a flower, the most gentle and the most unruly of emotions, the sadness of the death-scene, the splendid pageantry of state and arms.

In his striving towards freedom of expression, Shakespeare first began to discard rhyme, and resort to such metrical devices as *double endings, light and weak endings. In Love's Labour's Lost* there are only 9 double endings (*i. e.*, extra unaccented syllables at the end of lines) but in *Richard III*, which ends the First Period, there are 570 double endings. In the plays of the first period there are only 17 light endings and 2 weak endings, but in the later play of *Antony and Cleopatra* alone there are 71 light and 28 weak endings—and they are ever on the increase in his later plays. A light ending is a monosyllable at the end of a line, on which the voice can dwell in reading and a weak ending is a monosyllable at the end of a line, which both, in sense and pronunciation, is carried on to the next line, *And* is a *light* and *where* is a *weak* ending in the following verse from *Coriolanus*, III. ii.

"Which else would put you to your fortune, *and*
The hazard of much blood.

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I would dissemble with any nature *where*
My fortunes and my friends at stake, required
I should do so in honour."

This external evidence apart, the plays of the First Period are linked together in plot and expression—they are mainly lyrical in character and are steeped in the gaiety of youth. In *Love's Labour's Lost*, Shakespeare ridicules contemporary mannerisms and affections, but the noteworthy fact is Shakespeare's use of *mistaken identity*, which is the source of so much fun in his early comedies and of symmetrical plot. The symmetrical plot and mistaken identity devices are employed again in the *Comedy of Errors*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Two Gentlemen of Verona*. Characters are not sufficiently individualized in the early plays. *Richard III* is a one-character play, written under the shadow of Marlowe. *Richard II* has plenty of rhyme, quibbles and weak lines, matched by inconsistencies in the central figure ; its only relieving feature is its lyrical fervour. As regards the art of construction it may be noted that Shakespeare first intermingles themes in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* which develops into a plot with an under-plot in later plays ; but in *Romeo* and the two *Richards*, Shakespeare discovers and applies the principle of causing the action to revolve round, and depend upon, one or two central figures, of making character and not incident, the source of the action—a principle which is fully carried out in his tragedies. We note also that there is an increasing command over materials displayed by Shakespeare, and an increasing insight into character and mind. The lyricism of Shakespeare's early plays comes to full flowering in *Romeo and Juliet* and in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*. The poems *Venus* and *Lucrece* are the work of a student who is intoxicated with beauty—the beauty of the material universe as well as the beauty of mind and imagination.

Second Period

To the Second Period (1594 to 1601) belong *King John*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *1 and 2 Henry IV*, *Henry V*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *As You Like It*, *Twelfth Night*, *All's Well that Ends Well*, and the *Sonnets*.

In the Second Period the art of characterization is considerably advanced. First he touches on many different phases of life and presents a gallery of portraits. The political plays (*King John*, *Henry IV*, *Henry V*) epitomize the great era of Elizabeth's reign, and embody her political insight and wisdom.

"Henry IV advises his son that foreign wars unite a nation and Henry V acts on that policy ; the questions of Elizabeth's sovereignty, her right to the crown, are reflected in *John* and *Henry IV*, as are the Elizabethan necessity of preventing foreign intervention in national politics, and the principle that vexatious controversy, concerning the right to rule, might be, and was, less important than

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the duty of ruling strongly, wisely, and well. Throughout is the plea for national unity : throughout is the exultation of national strength, pride of England, love of its green fields and its sea-bound shores, rejoicing in conquests, faith in its power, and hope for its future."

As illustrative of Shakespeare's insight into character, it may be pointed out that he shows wonderful knowledge of the Celtic temperament in these plays ; Glendower in 1 *Henry IV*, credulous, superstitious, passionate, overruled in his contracts by prophecies ; Gower in 2 *Henry IV* ; Fluellen in *Henry V*, one who loves argument, quotes precedent, forgets names, likes literature, and is brave and hardy ; and lastly, Sir Hugh Evans in the *Merry Wives*, a most "vehement" man.

Secondly, Shakespeare shows rare skill and delicacy in drawing the female characters. Portia in the *Merchant of Venice* is the beginning of that succession of beautiful types of splendid womanhood whose watchword is *devotion*, and whose beauty and purity touch their character with pathos in their struggles against fate. Portia foreshadows Helena, Ophelia, Isabella, Desdemona and Cordelia. Rosalind and Celia of *As You Like It* are of an ideal cast. Rosalind and Celia wandering wearily, with their devoted Touchstone, through the wild, wonderful ways of a strange forest remind one of Virgil's *Eclogues*, where love-lorn shepherds tell the story of their lovesorrow in metrical cadences. There is a less pleasant and more passionate note in *All's Well That Ends Well*.

The links that connect this period with the first may be noted : the magnificent lyrical outburst of *Romeo* is echoed in the *Merchant of Venice*, when Jessica, so like Juliet, and Lorenzo tell over again the story of their love ; Marlowe's influence appears again in Shylock, and to Marlowe, Shakespeare pays a tribute in *As You Like It* :

> "Dead shepherd, now I find thy saw of might,
> Whoever loved who loved not at first sight ?"

Rosalind and Celia repeat in part the story of Julia and Silvia in the *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, and the device of mistaken identity, employed in the *Dream* and the *Errors* is used again in *Twelfth Night*. For *Venus* and *Lucrece* we have the "sugared" *Sonnets*—and the sonnets strike that note of gloom and despair which prelude the Third Period of foul-racking tragedies.

Lastly, the *metrical advance* in the Second Period. The proportion of double endings increases from 8 per cent in the First Period to 11·2 per cent in the Second. Light and weak endings in the First Period are as rare as ·162 per cent ; in the Second Period they rise to ·359 per cent. The ratio between rhyme and blank verse in the First Period is as 1 : 33 ; in the Second Period it is only as 1 ; 10·04.

Third Period

To the Third Period (1601–1609) belong *Julius Caesar*, *Hamlet*, *Measure for Measure*, *Troilus and Cressida*, *Othello*, *Macbeth*, *King Lear*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Coriolanus*, *Timon of Athens*.

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In the tragedies, Shakespeare deals with the problems of life and fate, evil-doing or error or excess followed by punishment, and also the wider net spread by evil, in which the innocent are often involved, with the suggestion of a dark power which crushes down the wicked and the innocent alike. As side-issues, there are the stings of ingratitude and treachery, a *Motif* which is further worked out in his plays of the Fourth Period, with the crowning result of forgiveness and reconciliation.

In *Julius Caesar*, Caesar pays the penalty of ambition, and Brutus falls through error or want of judgement—and there is the suggestion of dark forces which man reckons without. The strain of speculation in Brutus anticipates Hamlet and in Hamlet speculation usurps the place of action. In *Hamlet* the bright and happy life of the young prince is darkened by the lust and ingratitude of his mother and eclipsed by the revelation of his ungrateful uncle's foul murder of his father. Of the dark forces that drag down the hero of Shakespeare's tragedy there is almost always an innocent woman victim : so Ophelia in *Hamlet*. *Measure for Measure* is a comedy, against the gloom of lust and filth which touches his comedy, rises, radiant as a star, the figure of the "enskyed and sainted" Isabella. In her is recaptured the breath of his earlier comedies. There is a note of stark realism in *Troilus and Cressida*. Hector alone is untouched by this realism—and Hector with his sentiment of honour and impracticality recalls Brutus. In *Othello* the treachery of the trusted friend, Iago, ruins the hero and involves the innocent Desdemona in destruction, the gloom of which is only relieved by the idyll of the hero's winning and wooing and wearing his pride. In *Macbeth*, Shakespeare for the first time introduces a woman who appears to be unsexed—and all for ambition. The idea of moral retribution—death of Lady Macbeth under the pangs of conscience and death of Macbeth from Macduff's sword—is nowhere more clearly worked out than in this tragedy. Then follow the terrors and horrors of *Lear*. "Ingratitude of daughters, treachery of a son—driving father to despair, to madness, and to death, infidelity of a wife, plotting her husband's death, and poisoning her sister, to gratify her own lust, the heavens themselves joining in the wild storm of earthly passions"—these are at the core of the tragedy of *Lear*. *Antony and Cleopatra* is admired for its gorgeous eastern colour and the most wonderful study of a woman that Shakespeare has ever made. "In the earlier group of tragedies, from *Julius Caesar* to *Lear*, a woman is the passive confidant, the helpless victim, the good angel, or the deadly foe, of the tragic hero ; in the later group she becomes a companion-spirit, holding him by the spell of personality, of passion or of blood. Sex has no part in the sinister magnetism of Lady Macbeth ; but in the "strong toil of grace" cast by Cleopatra over Antony, the magnetism of sex becomes a source of tragedy, less harrowing indeed than the tragedy of Othello or Lear, but even richer in consummate poetry. *Coriolanus* is linked, on the one hand, with *Julius Caesar* by its picture of mob-mentality and with *Lear* by portraying the self-will and pride of the

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hero. But in *Coriolanus* is struck the keynote to the plays of the Fourth Period : "Thinkest thou it honourable for a noble man still to remember wrongs ?" In *Timon* there is real hardening of the soul of the hero, not by crime, but by ingratitude. He cries, "I am *misanthropos*, and hate mankind." And so he ends, "who, alive, all living men did hate."

Now the metrical advance. In the Second Period the double endings are 11·2 per cent ; in the Third Period they increase to 22·08 per cent. In the Second Period the light and weak endings are ·359 per cent ; in the Third Period they increase to 1·43 per cent. The ratio of rhyme to blank verse in the Second Period is as 1 : 10·04 ; in the Third Period it is as 1 : 25·8.

Fourth Period

To the Fourth Period (1609 to 1613) belong *Perecles*, *The Tempest*, *Cymbeline*, *The Winter's Tale*, *Henry VIII*. Shakespeare passes from the storm and stress of the Third Period to "a great peacefulness of light," a harmony of earth and heaven. The new notes are the notes of mercy and forgiveness, reunion and reconciliation. Two features specially distinguish the plays of the Fourth Period.

First, there is a tender touch about the woman. We may contrast the women of the Third Period with the women of the Fourth Period. Portia, the gentle wife of Brutus, is lost amid plots and assassinations. Ophelia is denied her love and is drowned. Isabella, sorely tired by temptation, barely escapes ruin. Desdemona is crushed by fate against which her simple and perfect womanhood cries out in vain. Poor Lady Macduff is deserted and murdered. Cordelia is disowned, banished from her father, is wronged and slain. Chaste Octavia is wedded to Antony and deserted. Volumnia and Virgilia are made the instruments of that ruin which they sought to avert. Now, gracious tenderness environs the women of the Fourth Period ; Thaisa and Marina, separated from Pericles, patient in adversity, are united at last and find happiness. Miranda, unaffected, unsophisticated, untainted by one ungenerous thought or impulse, tender, pitiful, open-hearted, so different from the Stratford-type women of Period I, the lively, pert and competent London-type women of Period II, the fate stricken women of Period III, nurtured in the love and wisdom of a noble father, is at last rewarded with the love of a noble prince. Imogen, belied, wronged by her husband, is at last reconciled, and forgives all who have done her harm. Hermione, disgraced, and thought to be dead, suffers in silence and finally forgives the husband who had so injured her. Perdita, the fair shepherdess, fragrant with the breath of the open fields and wild flowers, lost to her kin, is found again and takes part in the joyful reunion.

Secondly, these Fourth Period plays take us back to the joys of the simple life of nature. They paint Shakespeare's Stratford life—the wild flowers of the countryside, the junketings of the rustics, the merry roguish pedlar with his fairings for the maidens, the sheep-cots,

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the sheep-shearing. And as the country-scenes point to Shakespeare's renewed life at Stratford, so the scenes of reconciliation between husband and wife, the love of fathers for their daughters, and their watchful care over their children's destiny, point to his renewed life with his wife Anne, and his care of his two daughters—all that then remained alive of his children.

In the Fourth Period, Shakespeare returns to his original method of construction. Instead of concentrating the action in two or three main characters, as he did in his tragedies, he intermingles them, as in the First Period, but paints them on a broader canvas, still keeping character in the forefront. In many things Shakespeare seems to return to Period I – in pictures of a country-life, in the portraiture of girls, in themes like the sleeping ; but here the handling of materials is finer, characterization in deeper, charity, and forgiveness are everywhere—we seem almost to be in a new heaven on earth.

In metrical matters, the double endings increase to 30·3 percent from the 22·08 per cent of Period III ; the light and weak endings increase to 5·06 per cent from the 1·43 per cent of Period III ; but the rhyme to blank verse decreases to 1 : 53·8 from the 1: 25·8 of Period III.

10. SHAKESPEARE'S SELF-REVELATION

Shakespeare is a dramatist, and a dramatist does not lay bare his soul in his plays. The idea of getting at the soul of Shakespeare through his plays will be resented by many critics. The drama is an "objective" art ; the less said about the dramatist's self-revelation, the better. As a matter of fact, the dramatist conceals his self behind his characters—and particularly in the case of Shakespeare who has created such a bewildering variety of characters, not two being alike, his personality, if he has reflected it in any of his characters, is absolutely elusive. Yet Prof. J. Dover Wilson claims to have discovered the ' Essential Shakespeare" in his interesting study of the problems. His book is the high watermark of the "subjective" interpretation of Shakespeare. We need not go the whole hog with Prof. Wilson, but we may accept the reasoned conclusion of Leslie Stephen. And here is Leslie Stephen's summing up of the case :

"A dramatist is no more able than anybody else to bestow upon his character talents which he does not himself possess. If – as critics are agreed – Shakespeare's characters show humour, Shakespeare must have sense of humour himself. When Mercutio indulges in the wonderful tirade upon Queen Mab, or Jaques moralizes in the forest, we learn that their creator had certain powers of mind just as clearly as if we were reading a report of one of the wild combats at the "Mermaid". It is harder to define those qualities precisely than to say what is implied by Johnson's talk at the "Mitre", but the idiosyncrasy is at least as strongly impressed upon such characteristic mental displays. If we were to ask any critic whether such passages could be attributed to Marlowe or Ben Jonson, he would enquire whether we took him for a fool. If we were considering a bit of purely scientific exposition, the inference to character would not exist.

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A mathematician, I suppose, could tell me that the demonstration of some astronomical theorem was in Newton's manner, and the remark would not show whether Newton was amiable or spiteful, jealous or generous. But a man's humour and fancy are functions of his character as well as of his reason. To appreciate them clearly is to know how he feets as well as how he argues : what are the aspects of life which specially impress him, and what morals are most congenial. I do not see how the critic can claim an instinctive perception of the Shakespearean mode of thought without a perception of some side of his character. You distinguish Shakespeare's work from that of his rivals, as confidently as any expert judge of handwriting. You admit, too, that you can give a very fair account of the characteristics of the other writers. Then surely you can tell me —or at least you know "implicitly" what is the quality in which they are defective and Shakespeare pre-eminent.

"Half my knowledge of a friend's character is derived from his talk, and not the less if it is playful, ironical and dramatic. When we agree that Shakespeare's mind was vivid and subtle, that he shows a unique power of blending the tragic and the comic, we already have some indications of character ; and incidentally we catch revelations of more specific peculiarities. Part of my late reading was a charming book in which Mr. Justice Medden sets forth Shakespeare's accurate knowledge of field-sports. It seems to prove conclusively a proposition against which there can certainly be no presumption. We may be quite confident that he could thoroughly enjoy a day's coursing on the Cotswold Hills, and we know by the most undeniable proof that his sense of humour was tickled by the oddities of his fellow-sportsmen, the Shallows and the Slenders. It is at least equally clear that he had the keenest enjoyment of charms of the surrounding scenery. He could not have written *Midsummer Night's Dream* or *As You Like It*, if the poetry of the English greenwood had not entered into his soul. The single phrase about the deffodils—so often quoted for its magical power—is poor enough, if there were no other, of a nature exquisitely sensitive to the beauties of flowers and of spring time. It wants again, no such confirmation as Fuller's familiar anecdote to convince us that he could listen to and probably join in, a catch by Sir Toby Belch, or make Lord Southampton laugh as heartily as Prince Hall laughed at the jests of Falstaff. Shakespeare, again as this suggests, was certainly not a Puritan. That may be inferred by judicious critics from particular phrases or from the relation of Puritans to players in general. But without such reasoning we may go further and say that in the very conception of a Puritan Shakespeare involves a contradiction in terms. He represents, of course, to the fullest degree, the type which is just the antithesis of Puritanism; the large and tolerant acceptance of human nature which was intolerable to the rigid and strait-laced fanatics, whom, nevertheless, we may forgive in consideration of their stern morality. People, indeed, have argued, very fruitlessly I fancy, as to Shakespeare's religious beliefs. Critics tell us and I have no doubt truly, that it would be impossible to show conclusively from his work whether he considered himself to

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be an Anglican or Catholic. But a man's real religion is not to be defined by the formula he accepts or inferred from the Church to which he belongs. His outward profession is chiefly a matter of accident and circumstance, not of character. We may, I think, be pretty certain that Shakespeare's religion, whatever it may have been in its external form, included a profound sense of the mystery of the world and of the pettiness of the little lives that are rounded by a sleep ; a conviction that we are such stuff as dreams are made of and a constant sense is impressed in the most powerful sonnets that our present life is an infinitesimal moment in the vast, "abysm" of eternity. Shakespeare, we know, read Montaigne ; and if, like Montaigne, he accepted the Papist divines, he would clearly not have escaped the creed in which he was brought up, he would have sympathized in Montaigne's sceptical and humorous view of theological controversialists playing their fantastic tricks of logic before high Heaven. Undoubtedly, he despised a pedant, and the pedantry which disolayed itself in the wranglings of Protestants. Critics, again, have disputed as to Shakespeare's politics; and the problem is complicated by the desire to show that his politics were as good as his poetry. Sound Liberals are unwilling to admit that he had aristocratic tendencies, because they hold that all aristocrats are wicked and narrow-minded. It is, of course, an anachronism to transplant new problems to those days, and we cannot say that Shakespeare would have thought of modern applications of the principles which he accepted. But I do not see how any man could have been more clearly what may be called an intellecutal aristocrat. His contemet for the mob may be good-humoured enough, but is surely unequivocal; from the Portrait of Jack Cade, promising, like a good Socialist, that the three hooped pot shall have ten hoops, to the fiirst, second and third citizens who give a display of their insanity and instability in *Coriolanus* or *Julius Caesar*, Shakespeare may be speaking dramatically through Ulysses in *Troilus and Cressida*; but at least he must have fully appreciated the argument for order ; and understood by order that the cultivated and intelligent should rule and the common herd have as little direct voice in state affairs as Elizabeth and James could have desired.

"When we have got so far we have already, as it seems admitted certain attributes, which are as much personal as literary. If you admit that Shakespeare was a humorist, intensively sensitive to natural beauty, a scorner of the pedantry, whether of scholars or theologians, endowed with an amazingly wide and tolerant view of human nature, radically opposed to Puritanism or any kind of fanaticism, and capable of hearty sympathy with the popular instincts and yet with a strong persuasion of the depth of popular folly, you inevitably affirm at least some negative propositions about the man himself. You can say with confidence what are the charcteristics which were thoroughly antipathetic to him even though it may be difficult to describe accurately the characteristics which he positively embodied.

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"Another point is, it would seem, too plain to need much emphasis. The author of *Romeo and Julliet* was, I suppose, capable of Romeo's passion. We may doubt that the sun is fire but can hardly doubt that Shakespeare could love. In this case, it seems to me the power of intuition is identical with the emotional power. A man could surely have been unable to find the most memorable utterance in literature of passions of which he was not himself abnormally susceptible. It may be right to describe a poet's power as marvellous, but why should we hold it to be miraculous ? I agree with Pope's common sense remark about Helosia's "well sung woes he best can paint 'em who can feel 'em most". Surely that is the obvious explanation, and I am unable to see why there should be any difficulty in receiving it."

11. SHAKESPEARE'S LEARNING : HIS SOURCES

In the prologue to *Volpone*, Ben Jonson wrote : "'Tis known, five weeks fully penn'd it : From his own hand without a coadjutot, novice, journey man, or tator," and this claim to have written his masterpiece so quickly without assistance emphasizes a dominant condition of work in the Elizabethan theatre and a resulting practice. The repertory system and competition between the companies, as well as the limited number of theatre-goers, demanded a regular supply of fresh plays ; rapidity of composition was essential, and a natural result was collaboration. Henslowe's accounts often show three or four, or even five poets, working together on one play.

The urgent needs of theatre encouraged the poets to lay their hands on all likely matter for drama. The more scholarly among them made use of their wide reading. *Tamburlaine* shows that Marlowe's knowledge of history and geography was extensive, and Johnson having inserted in *Catiline* long translated extracts from Cicero's speeches, retorted upon his critics : "Though you commend the first two Acts, with the people, because they are the worst ; and dislike the oration of Cicero, in regard you read some piece of it at school and understand it not yet ; yet I shall find the way to forgive you," Other dramatists chose more popular sources.

It is necessary to start with something about the amount of Shakespeare's learning. Prof. T. W. Baldwin in his monumental volume has given us a clear idea of the kind of education Shakespeare would have followed at petty school and a grammar school. There is no real reason to doubt that he attended both, as he somewhere acquired the equivalent knowledge, but it is possible that because of the financial crisis in his father's fortunes, he did not complete the full curriculum. He acquired a reasonable knowledge of Latin, and perhaps a slight knowledge of Greek too.

The extent of Shakespeare's classical learning is nevertheless still a matter of dispute. Some (including J.A.K. Thomson, John Dover Wilson, and F.P. Wilson) believe that Jonson's "little Latin and less Greek" should be taken to mean hardly any "Latin and no Greek." Others think that though Shakespeare had little or no Greek, he

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understood Latin 'pretty well', and that his knowledge of language was small only in comparison with Jonson's.—(Edgar I. Fripp).

Shakespeare used translations where they were available ; but he did not use them slavishly, and there is plenty of evidence that he read Latin works of which there was no translation—two plays by Plautus, Buchanan, Leslie, some of Livy, and (if we are to believe E. Honigmann) two manuscript chronicles about King John. He knew some Virgil in the original, though he could have read the translations of Douglas, Surrey, Phaer, Standhurst. There is some evidence that he knew Erasmus's *Colloquis* and *Adagia*. The strongest argument in favour of Shakespeare's having had a fluent knowledge of Latin is afforded by his coinages. Occasionally, he blunders as when he uses 'orifex' for 'orifice' ; but his coinages, or those reputed to be his, generally show both knowledge and tact.

Of modern languages, Shakespeare acquired some knowledge of French, Italian, and perhaps a smattering of Spanish. He was not a learned man of the conventional type, but he had enough education for his needs ; and he uses what he read with a masterly ease and assurance. He may, of course, have read hundreds of books which have left no trace on his writings ; but the most unlikely books did leave their traces. Like Coleridge, he created much of his Poetry from forgotten reading.

The influence of certain books on Shakespeare's work has been examined in detail. The Bible left its mark on every play in the canon, and, as Richmond Noble has shown, the earlier echoes are mostly from the Bishops' Bible and the latter ones mostly from the Geneva version.

The Ovidian influence is also pervasive, particularly in the earlier plays—(E.I. Fripp). Florio's Montaigne affected both thought and vocabulary.—(G. C. Taylor). The *Mirror of Magistrates* is echoed in the Histories, in *King Lear* and in *Cymbeline*. The influence of *Homilies* has been traced in several plays—(A. Hart). There are echoes from Harsnet's *Declaration* not only in *Lear* but also in *The Tempest*. It would be possible to trace the influence of many other books on Shakespeare's work though the majority of these echoes may do little else than exhibit the working of his subconscious mind, and the extent of his reading.

It is certain that as an actor he was acquainted with a large number of plays in which he performed. He knew many, if not all, of Marlowe's works. He echoes *Tamburlaine*, *Dido*, and *Edward II* ; he quotes from *Faustus* ; and he quotes from and echoes *Hero and Leander*. But his debt to Marlowe was more profound ; from him he learnt the art of blank verse and developed his own conception of tragedy.

From Greene's *Friar Bacon* and *James* IV, Shakespeare may have learnt something about the interweaving of several plots and there is evidence that he knew *Menaphon*, *Euphues' Censure to Philautus*, and the coney-catching pamphlets as well as *Pandasto*,

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the source of *Winter's Tale*. Lodge provided the plot of *As You Like It* but Shakespeare appears to have been little influenced by his poems or play.

It is not too much to say that every characteristic of Shakespearean comedy, except the skilful blending of prose and verse, is to be found in Lyly. Farcical scenes like those between the Dromios, between Moth, Armado and Costerd, between the Launce and Speed, and between Launcelot and old Gobbo ; wit contests between persons of rank, Boyet and the French ladies, Portia and Nerissa, Beatrice and Benedick ; the use of parallel plots, the use of songs, the pastoral spirit of *As You Like It*, the introduction of fairies, and the disguising of girls as boys, these are a few of the dramatic devices which Shakespeare learned from Lyly. But his indebtedness is more profound, though less tangible, in the creation of atmosphere. The world of Shakespearean comedy is fundamentally the same as Lyly's. The conventions, the style, the very air we breathe is the same. There can be no doubt that Shakespeare's comedies would have been very different had not Lyly preceded him. Not only was Shakespeare generally indebted to his forerunner but more than fifty specific borrowings have been pointed out. Furthermore, Shakespeare learned from Lyly how to write prose, and though in *I Henry IV* he poked fun at the excesses of Euphuism, he remained to the end of his career profoundly affected by it. The civilized prose of the great comedies owes its constructions, its rhythms, its balance and its poise to the example of Lyly. It sharpened the edge of Shakespeare's wit, and gave his dialogue more force and sparkle. Touchstone, Falstaff and Beatrice use a modified form of the style in which its inherent artificiality is toned down.

There is some evidence that Shakespeare had read some of the Nashe-Harvey controversy, as it left its traces on *Love's Labour's Lost ;* but one of Nashe's pamphlets, *Pierce Penilesse* seems to have had considerable influence on *Hamlet*. There are a few phrases in *Othello* too that recall *Pierce Penilesse*.

Ben Jonson mentioned that Shakespeare surpassed 'sporting Kyd'; and certainly *The Spanish Tragedy* and possibly an earlier version of *Hamlet* were among the most fruitful of the works of the University Wits in their influence on his plays. He also seems to have known *Cornelio* and he alludes to *Solyman and Perseda*.

Shakespeare had read *Faerie Queene*, but its influence on his own work was surprisingly small. He knew most of Sidney's works —*Astrophel and Stella*, *The Defence of Poesy* and *Arcadia*—and much of Daniel's including *Delia*, *Rosamund*, *A Letter from Octavia*, *Cleopatra* and *The Civil Wars*.

So many books and plays have not survived that even if we read all the extant books published before 1616 we could still be sure that we had not read all the books known to Shakespeare ; and of course, some ideas or phrases apparently echoed from books, we knew, may in fact be echoed from books which are now lost. Even apart from this, some resemblance may be coincidental ; Shakespeare

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may have derived the word, the phrase, the image or the idea from a variety of sources—from conversation, from dictionaries, from manuscripts, from letters. Shakespeare combined a variety of different sources in the texture of his verse, and the process, in most cases, was unconscious.

We are on surer ground when we attempt to trace the sources of his plots, though, even here, there are obstacles in the way. In a number of cases, *e. g.*, *Hamlet, Two Gentlemen of Verona, Merry Wives of Windsor*—there was probably a lost source-play. The Histories present a special problem, since there is so much disagreement about the materials on which Shakespeare worked. Some years ago it appeared to be settled that the second and the third parts of *Henry VI* were Shakespeare's unaided work ; now it is suggested either that the *Contention* and the *True Tragedy* were used by him as sources, or else that these bad quartos were like Shakespeare's plays, derived from the work of previous dramatists. It used to be generally accepted that *King John* was based on the *Troublesome Raigne*, but the latest editor, Honigmann, assumes that the position of the two plays was reversed, the *Troublesome Raigne* being based on *King John*. There was possibly a source-play behind *Richard II*, so it is unprofitable to discuss whether Shakespeare consulted a number of remoter sources. *I Henry IV* and *Henry V* were derived in part from the *Famous Victories*, a play which exists only in a mangled and truncated version, so that we cannot know exactly what Shakespeare borrowed from it. The authenticity of I *Henry VI* and *Henry VIII* is still a matter of dispute, and till we can be sure how much Peele and others wrote of the former and how much, if any, Fletcher wrote of the latter, the discussion of their sources will be inconclusive. *Richard III* is the only one of the Histories which presents a straightforward problem.

Shakespeare's method of composition differed from play to play. For one or two no direct source has been discovered. For several of his plots Shakespeare appears to have used only one source (*e. g.*, *As You Like It* and *The Winter's Tale*). Most of the plays, however, have more than one source, and several of them draw on a variety of sources.

It cannot be said that Shakespeare never invented a plot, as that of *Love's Labour's Lost*, at least, may have been his own invention. Nor can it be maintained that he invariably used an earlier play, though G.A. Greer has tried to show that for 22 of his plays, Shakespeare made use of an earlier play, and that for 2 only of his plays has no source-play been suggested. Greer plausibly argues that whenever possible Shakespeare used translations, and much less plausibly, that he may not have been able to read Italian, French, Greek, or Latin. This view is quite untenable. Baldwin rightly disclaims any responsibility for the idea that Shakespeare was a learned man ; but readers of his several volumes will allow that the poet absorbed a fair amount of education.

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No one disputes that for five of his plays (*Meas. for Meas.*, I & II *Henry IV*, *Henry V* and *Lear*), Shakespeare made some use of an earlier play ; but it is certain that even for these he used other sources as well. There is not a single play that can be shown to have merely a dramatic source, though it may be admitted that the loss of so many Elizabethan plays makes it possible to argue that all, or nearly all, Shakespeare's plays may have had a dramatic source.

It would be satisfying to be able to show that just as Shakespeare's work falls into several periods in respect of versification, characterization, and imagery, so in respect of sources too, it shows a characteristic development from the simple to the complex, or from the complex to the simple. But there is nothing to support such a theory.

It seems probable that more sources will eventually be discovered though such discoveries are unlikely to lead to radical modifications of our knowledge of Shakespeare's methods of work. He naturally followed the methods of imitation which he had learnt at school, and his genius was displayed more in the imaginative fusion of detail from different sources than in pure invention in the modern sense. How conscious the process of fusion was, must remain a matter of opinion.

The study of Shakespeare's sources is no substitute for criticism. The sources throw relatively little light on the finished plays, though now and again, when the interpretation of a passage is disputable the knowledge of a source may show us which interpretation is the more likely. There are other occasions when the knowledge that Shakespeare deviated from his known sources will cause us to ask questions which may lead to a true interpretation of the play. But apart from such a limited use of source study as an adjunct to criticism, it may be justified on wider grounds. Anything which throws light, however dim, on Shakespeare's craftsmanship or on his methods of composition is not without interest, and stands in no need of defence.

—(Adapted from Kenneth Muir : *Shakespeare's Sources*)

12. THE SEQUENCE OF SHAKESPEARE'S PLAYS

"Obviously, if the reader wishes to observe the development of Shakespeare's style and the growth of his powers as an artist, the most satisfactory order in which to read his plays would be that in which they were composed. Yet important as the matter is, the arrangement of Shakespeare's works in chronological order is one of the most difficult of scholarly problems. In many cases it is quite impossible to determine the order of succession, many of the dates usually assigned to plays are conjectural and those who know most about Shakespeare are the least willing to suggest a definite order or to be dogmatic concerning the exact year in which an individual play was written. In the case of a modern author, information to answer questions of this kind is readily accessible ; in Shakespeare's case it is almost wholly lacking. The traditional order of the First Folio,

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which classifies the plays as Comedies, Histories, and Tragedies and places *The Tempest* first and *Cymbeline* last, is still adhered to in many modern editions, but scholars universally reject this arrangement as having no chronological basis. The character of the evidence upon which they attempt a rearrangement will be clear from a few examples. The sources of information are six in number.

(A) Records of Performance

These are few in number and usually furnish a date before which a play was composed without any information as to how long before. Thus an account of the revels of law students at Gray's Inn on December 28, 1594, mentions a performance of *The Comedy of Errors*; one John Manningham, a student at the Middle Temple, in his diary mentions seeing *Twelfth Night* there on February 2, 1602, a foreign visitor to London, Thomas Platter, records in his diary seeing *Julius Caesar* on September 21, 1599, the first edition of *Love's Labour's Lost* (1598) mentions a performance at court the previous Christmas ; and an account of the burning of the Globe Theatre June 29,1613, refers to Henry VIII as a new play.

(B) Literary Allusions

Of these the most important is Francis Meres' praise of Shakespeare in *Palladius Tamia*(1598) and his specific mention of twelve plays then written : *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *Love's Labour's Lost*, *Love's Labour's Won* (unidentified), *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Richard II*, *Richard III*, *Henry IV*, *King John*; *Titus Andronicus*, and *Romeo and Juliet*. There is also allusion to Talbot – a character in *Henry VI*, in Thomas Nashe's *Pierce Peninlesse* (1591) ; and a note about *Hamlet*, made by Gabriel Harvey sometime between 1598 and 1601. Like the notices of performances, these allusions are usually indefinite and furnish only a terminal date.

(C) References in the Plays to Datable Historical Events

Shakespeare, again, is sparing in "topical allusions", and passages thought to refer to current events or controversies require caution on the part of the interpreter. Yet, the chorus before the fifth act of *Henry V* contains a clear allusion to the campaign of the Earl of Essex in Ireland, and fixes the date of the performance at which that prologue was used between March 27 and September 28, 1599. There are also allusions in *Hamlet* to the revival of the boy actors (1599) in *Macbeth*, to the house of Stuart; and perhaps, in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, to the baptism ceremonies of Prince Henry of Scotland (1594).

(D) Links Between Plays Themselves

The most marked of these is the continuity yf Richard II, and Henry IV, and the author's promise at the end of the last-named play of continuing the story in *Henry V*, which establishes the chronological sequence of these four plays. The pointed allusion of Robin Goodfellow in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* that this time "naught shall go ill, Jack shall have Jill ", likewise seems to be a link with

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Love's Labour's Lost, which "doth not end like an old play, Jack hath not Jill". If so, it establishes the order of composition, though not a definite date.

(E) Dates of Publication

Dates on title pages or dates of registration in the books of the Stationers' Company are less valuable than might at first be supposed, because in Shakespeare's time plays were almost never written for publication, and these which "escaped into print" usually did so after their popularity on the stage had declined. Yet, for several of Shakespeare's plays on other reliable information exists, among them *Richard III* (1597), *Romeo and Juliet* (157), *Richard II* (1597), *Henry IV* (1598), *Much Ado* (1600) and *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (1602). *Antony and Cleopatra* was entered for publication in 1608 and *As You Like It* in 1600, though neither appeared in print before 1623 ; *Troilus and Cresseida* was registered in 1603, though no edition earlier than 1609 is known. The date of licensing or of publication, therefore, at least gives a terminal date and is sometimes a valuable clue.

(F) Variations of Style and Versification

This is the least reliable type of evidence, and great caution must be exercised in drawing inferences from it. The assumption is that as Shakespeare grew in experience, his style of writing reflected his intellectual development, his character study deepened, his taste improved, and his technique became more and more individual. Especially singled out have been the variations of Shakespeare's blank verse and growth from a stereotyped to a flexible medium. Certain broad features of Shakespeare's development as an artist are of course recognizable, but obviously also, a detailed literary and psychological analysis is possible only after the proper order of the plays has been established, and not before. Subject-matter and mood, too, determine to a large extent the style of writing, and allowance must also be made for experiment or for passing influences. Yet taken as a whole this "internal evidence", when tactfully and objectively used, is valuable, if only as a check upon other evidence.

Regarding internal evidence we have to look into style, versification, diction and other such things as are connected with the workmanship of a particular play. In Shakespeare's plays we find three stages of development of the mind and art of the dramatist. In the first stage we find richer expression but poorer thought while in the middle stage we find both thought and expression equally well-balanced ; but in the third stage we find expression falling behind thought because thought becomes mature and expression cannot cope with it or cannot express it properly. Then again, in the first stage, we find symmetry or contrast of characters, while in the later stages we find subtlety of characterisation which is remarkable particularly in the greater tragedies. Besides, in the earlier plays, we notice much of delight in beauty, joy of living, cleverness in expression and youthfulness in outlook, while in the later plays, we

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find the glow of imagination deepening into philosophic thought and of humour into pathos. With the advance of years and with the maturity of art, the outlook of a man of life and character becomes perfectly changed, and the manner of expression also becomes sober, sedate, and even gloomy. That is why, in the great tragedies of Shakespeare, we find grim humour instead of sparkling wit as we find in the earlier plays, comedies or tragedies.

Of internal evidence, there is the verse test by which we can say whether a play belongs to an earlier or a later period. In his earlier plays, particularly in comedies, we can find rhyme more in abundance, while it slowly disappears altogether with the maturity of the artist. For example, end-stopt verse is the chief feature of the earlier plays. An end-stopt verse means a verse in which the sense of each line is complete, and consequently, the pause comes at the end of each line. A run-on verse is one in which the sense runs from one line to another without a pause at the end of the line. As far as light-ending verse is concerned, a line closes with an important monosyllable, but when the monosyllable is carried on in sense and pronunciation to the next line, it is regarded as a weak ending. A double or feminine ending is an extra-syllable added to a normal line of blank verse. Weak ending is conspicuously absent in the earlier plays of Shakespeare, while double-ending or feminine ending can be found in his later plays.

13. SHAKESPEARE'S GENIUS—AS A POET AND DRAMATIST

1. Universality

"And such was Shakespeare, whose strong soul
could climb
Steeps of sheer terror, sound the ocean grand
Of passions deep ; or over Fancy's strand
Trip with his fairies, keeping step and time.
His too the power to laugh out full and clear
With unembittered joyance, and to move
Along the silent shadowy paths of love
As tenderly as Dante, whose austere
Stern spirit through the worlds below, above,
Unsmiling strode ; to tell the tidings here." —*W. W. Story.*

"Shakespeare's work alone can be said to possess the organic strength and infinite variety, the throbbing fulness, vital complexity and breathing truth of Nature herself. In points of artistic resource and technical ability—such as, copious and expressive diction, freshness and pregnancy of verbal combination, richly modulated verse, and structural skill in the handling of incident and action—Shakespeare's supremacy is indeed sufficiently assured. But, after all, it is of course in the spirit and substance of his work, his power of piercing to the hidden centres of character, of touching the deepest springs of impulse and passion, out of which emerge the issues of life and of evolving those issues dramatically with a flawless strength, subtlety, and truth, which raises him so immensely above and beyond

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not only the best of the playwrights who went before him, but the whole line of illustrious dramatists that came after him. It is Shakespeare's unique distinction that he has an absolute command over all the complexities of thought and feeling that prompt to action and bring out the dividing lines of character. He sweeps with the hand of a master the whole gamut of human experience, from the lowest note to the very top of its compass, from the sportive childish treble of Mamilius, and the pleading boyish tones of Prince Arthur, up to the spectre-haunted terrors of Macbeth, the tropical passion of Othello, the agonised sense and tortured spirit of Hamlet, the sustained elemental grandeur, the Titanic force, the utterly tragical pathos of King Lear." —*T. S. Baynes.*

"The greatest genius that perhaps human nature has yet produced, our *myriad-minded* Shakespeare." —*T. S. Coleridge.*

"No other author had ever so copious, so bold, so *creative* an imagination, with so perfect a knowledge of the passions, the humours and the sentiments of mankind. He painted all characters, from kings down to peasants, with equal truth and equal force. If human nature were destroyed, and no monument were left of it except his works, other beings might know *what man was* from those writings."
—*George, Lord Lyttleton.*

"When Learning's triumph o'er her barb'rous foes
First rear'd the stage, immortal Shakespeare rose ;
Each change of many coloured life he drew
Exhausted worlds, and then imagin'd new." —*Garrick.*

"Shakespeare is above all writers the poet of Nature, the poet that holds up to his readers a faithful mirror of man and his environment, manners and life. His characters do not belong to this country or that, one profession or the other, but come from all lands and all walks of life. They are the rightful progeny of common humanity, such as the world will always supply and observation will always find, unaffected alike by the vagaries of fashion, the accidents of custom and the changes of opinion. They run the whole gamut of the world, the flesh and the devil, motivated by general passions and principles and conforming to the common pattern of life. Shakespeare's persons are not individuals ; they are a species eternal and true taken from nowhere in particular, though met here, there and everywhere.

"And yet paradoxically enough no two characters of Shakespeare are alike. Shakespeare never repeats himself. Indeed universality of idea and individuality of character are his specialities. With all the versatility of a dramatic Proteus, he changes himself into every character and enters into every condition of human nature. Myriad are the shapes and guises, but like the colours in a kaleidoscope, all so bright and clear, all so true to life, that in the words of Pope it is a sort of injury to call Shakespeare's characters by so distant a name as copies of Nature. Or, as Goethe would have it, "his characters are like watches with dial-plates of transparent crystal ; they show you the hour like others, and the inward mechanism also is all visible."

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"It was not for nothing that Shakespeare's last hero was a master-magician, a universal charmer. Prospero is a significant symbol ; but with all its significance it does not explain enough. Rather like Wordsworth's beautiful violet, half-seen, half-hidden, it only beautifully tantalises. For magic, however transfiguring from the simple Mango-trick to the stupendous Rope-trick is, after all, only a trick, eerie and esoteric trick, but a trick all the same, Shakespearean magic, on the other hand, lies open and above board in his plays and poetry for anyone with the eyes, the ear and the wit to understand. And for a second, all magic dies with the magician. A posthumous thaumaturgist is neither seen nor heard of. Yet Shakespeare's magic was not made much of in his lifetime. He had caused a flutter in the dovecotes of dramatists and poets, he had made them sit up and take notice ; but when all is said, he was one among the many, a tall poppy with whom others, even the tallest of the tall, had to reckon, but by no means surely a Triton among the minnows. His magic worked later, distance lent enchantment to the view and continues still to lend it. Already Shakespearean has grown from a snowball into an avalanche and Shakespearolatry has become a regular religion.

"Well, where vagueness is bliss it is folly to be clear. What he was, the greatest thinkers, critics and poets could not fathom. Goethe called him second only to God ; Coleridge termed him million-mouthed ; Wordsworth compared him to a mountain, and they all left it at that. Perhaps an Aristotle alone could place Shakespeare in clear-cut category and Aristotle flourished once in remote antiquity and is not going to flourish again. Nonetheless, gods and groundlings alike, or as Bottom would say, every mother's son of us could enjoy the magic. Here is matter for all tastes, all prejudices, all predilections. Here is knowledge without tears, pleasure without sin, upliftment without penance.

"Nor, need you be taken aback at this funny farrago of *panem et circenses*, church juxtaposed with cinema screen, and religion brought to the Rialto. If you call it Gilbertian, well, then so is life, at once topsyturvy and humorous. For what is life but a musical miscellany of pleasure and pain, high seriousness and hilarious laughter. And to this Shakespeare spoke with a voice deep as Tophet and high as Heaven. In this Shakespeare was a prophet. A peculiar prophet though, in that the man sang and did not preach except through music. More, while he set out the riddle of life and gave all the necessary clues, he did not care to solve it, but left his Pericles, Prince of Tyre, as a standing warning against daring Oedipuses. Enough that life has a harmony as the Spheres have theirs ; this for angels, that for mortals. Life is a gigantic promenade concert with the whole world for its audience. They that stand still or go out of their way seeking the Primum Mobile, do so at their peril. This is what Shakespeare has sung and spoken through a megaphone as it were in his works with none of your Dantean defeatism but with right apostolic fervour.

"Hence it is that Shakespeare's gayest comedies are intersper-

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sed with scenes and interludes of solemn seriousness and civil-suited melancholy, and his tragedies of the deepest pathos are chock-a-block with passages and part-singings of scintillating wit and side-splitting laughter. Hence, too, that crown comic character of all times, that mountain of flesh, exuding wit at every pore, that brazen-browed, Toledo-tongued Sir John Falstaff of Munchausenesque mendacity and Shavian cynicism, Indian *Bidushak* and Birbal in one, rolls his way through tragedies and comedies on and illustrating as if in person that life is one chiaroscuro of alternating light and shade, one fabric of which joy and sorrow are the warp and the woof.

"Even a prophet was without honour in his land. Not so Shakespeare.

'His writings were confessed to be such,

As neither Man, nor Muse can praise too much ; '

and this was 'all men's suffrage'. He broke 'unities and usage,' Priscians head and princely genealogies and was the more applauded for that. 'Better a mechanic rule were stretched or broken than a great beauty were omitted', said Dryden. 'There is more beauty,' said Addison, 'in the words of a great genius who is ignorant of the rules of art, than in those of a little genius who knows and observes them.' 'Ignorant of the rules perhaps but by no means an ignoramus.' For, though without a particular piece of Oxon parchment in his portfolio he had yet won many a richer distinction in the University of Genius which has turned out Homer and Chaucer before and was later to turn out Balzac and Dickens, *viz* ., the public street and the tavern where you read no books, the mighty bloodless substitute for life as Stevenson called them but the 'liveableness of life' in all the colours of the rainbow. Not that he did not know art, but that he knew it so well that he could conceal it too. 'He was master of an art which no one else could reach,' said Ben Jonson who was an artist if ever there was one. And that Sultan of Literature, Dr. Johnson, who has debunked many a fair reputation nobly won, wrote, 'He who has mazed his imagination in following the phantoms which other writers raise up before him, may here be cured of his delirious ecstasies, by reading human sentiments in human language ; by scenes from which a hermit may estimate the transactions of the world and a confessor 'predict the progress of the world. More trenchant still is Lyttleton who in his *Dialogues of the Dead* said that Shakespeare's knowledge of the passions, the humours and the sentiments of mankind was so perfect and so perfectly expressed that 'if human nature were destroyed and no monument were left of it, except his work, other beings might know what man was from those writings.' Such was thrice-sweet Shakespeare, 'honey-tongued' and 'mellifluous' of speech, saccharine of diction and of luscious imagination all compact.

"The world is prolific of authors and prolific authors are the order of the day. There are authors that amuse, authors that instruct, and authors that elevate, to say nothing of 'shilling-shockers' and penny-a-liners beyond the pale. But authors who at once amuse, instruct and elevate are the salt of the earth. No wonder, they are

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so rare and like all rare things of utility they are precious as well. Free trade or economic nationalism, they have an international value and currency of their own. Quotas, pacts and restrictions bind them not ; they are heart-deep. For them, there exist neither snobbish segregations of class nor Chauvinistic quarantines of country ; they are cosmopolitans honoured with freedom of every city of civilization. They go strong while they live, and when they have shuffled off their mortal coil, they go stronger like Caesar's spirit. To this privileged band belongs William Shakespeare. He has been more than three centuries dead. But he was an Elizabethan—the age of vim, valour and vine, the 'water of life.' The older the wine, the better the banquet they say. What about Shakespeare, then, the wine of life incarnate, whose banquet persists still, dainty and delicious as ever ? A super-Voronoff for the mind and the spirit with hormones and homoglobins all complete ! Or a new version of Peter Pan, ever young himself and making others young too. A modern poet has written :

Revolving years have flitted on,
Corroding Time has done its worst,
Pilgrim and worshipper have gone
From Avon's shrine to shrines of dust ;
But Shakespeare lives unrivall'd still
And unapproached by mortal mind,
The giant of parnassus' hill,
The pride, the monarch of mankind.'

"Great praise is this ! Yet not enough. For though he bestrides the narrow world like a Colossus, neither the men who walk under his huge legs are all petty, nor do his admirers whose name is legion peep about to find themselves dishonourable graves. Ben Jonson and Milton, Carlyle and Quincey, Goethe and Schiller, were giants themselves, but they acknowledged and acclaimed him their 'Big Brother' And far from finding themselves dishonourable graves, they lived and learned, poured libations and burnt incense at his shrine and were inspired to works of immortality. Through monarch of mankind his is no ordinary monarchy. For while, thrones may totter to the dust, crowns tumble in the mire, and kings wander jobless—the war aftermath has sent many perambulating the capitals of Europe – Shakespeare on his pedestal in the valhalla of Literature will stand firm and four-square, swaying generation after generation of scholars, and savants, critics and connoisseurs, hermits and hero-worshippers alike"

2. Dramatic Faculty

"Many dramatic writers of different ages are capable, occasionally, of breaking out, with great fervour of genius, in the natural language of strong emotion. No writer of antiquity is more distinguished for abilities of this kind than Euripides. His whole heart and soul seem torn and agitated by the force of the passion he imitates. He ceases to be Euripides ; he is Medea : he is Orestes. Shakespeare, however, is most eminently distiuguished, not only by these occasional

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sallies, but by imitating the passion in all its aspects, by pursuing it through all its windings and labyrinths, by moderating or accelerating its impetuosity according to the influence of other principal and of external events, and finally by combining it in a 'judicious manner with other passions and propensities, or by setting it aptly in opposition. He, thus, unites the two essential powers of dramatic invention, that of forming characters ; and that of imitating in their natural expression, the passions and affection of which they are composed.' —*W. Richardson.*

3. Nature versus Art

"He was an eminent instance of the truth of that rule, *Poeta non fit sed nascitur ;* one is not *made* but *born* a poet. Indeed, his learning was very little, so that, as Cornish diamonds are not polished by any lapidary, but are pointed and smoothed even as they are taken out of the earth, so nature itself was all the *art* which was used upon him.

"Many were the wit-combats betwixt him and Ben Jonson ; which two I behold like a Spanish great galleon and an English man of war ; Master Jonson (like the former) was built far higher in learning ; solid but slow in his performances. Shakespeare, with the English man of war, lesser in bulk, but lighter in sailing, could turn with all tides, tack about, and take advantage of all winds, by the quickness of his wit and invention." —*Thomas Fuller.*

"If ever any author deserved the name of an *original*, it was Shakespeare. Homer himself drew not his art so immediately from the fountains of Nature ; it proceeded through Egyptian strainers and channels, and came to him not without some tincture of the learning or some cast of the models of those before him. The poetry of Shakespeare was inspiration indeed ; he is not so much an imitator as an instrument of Nature ; and it is not so just to say that he speaks from her as that she speaks through him." —*Alexander Pope.*

"Shakespeare came out of Nature's hand like Pallas out of Jove's head, at full growth and mature." —*George Colman.*

4. Truth and Variety of Character

"His *characters* are so much Nature herself, that it is a sort of injury to call them by so distant a name as copies of her. Those of other poets have a constant resemblance, which shows that they received them from one another and were but multipliers of the same image : each picture, like a mock rainbow, is but the reflection of a reflection. But every single character in Shakespeare is as much an individual as those in life itself ; it is as impossible to find any two alike ; as such as from their relation or affinity in any respect appear most to be twins, will upon comparison be found remarkably distinct. To this life and variety of character we must add the wonderful preservation of it, which is such throughout his plays, that, had all the speeches been printed without the very names of the persons I believe one might have applied them with certainty to every speaker. —*Alexander Pope.*

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"His plays alone are properly expressions of the passions, not descriptions of them. His characters are real beings of flesh and blood ; they speak like man, not like author.". —*William Hazlitt.*

5. Powers of Insight and Imagination

"Shakespeare is as astonishing for the exuberance of his genius in abstract notions, and for the depth of his analytic and philosophic insight, as for the scope and minuteness of his poetic imagination. It is as if into a mind poetical *form* in there had been poured all the *matter* that existed in the mind of his contemporary Bacon. In Shakespeare's plays, we have thought, history, expedition, philosophy, all within the round of the poet." —*David Masson.*

"Through all the forenoon of our triumphant day till the utter consummation and ultimate ascension of dramatic poetry incarnate and transfigured in the master-singer of the world, the quality of his tragedy was as that of Marlowe's, broad, single and intense ; large of hand, voluble of tongue, direct of purpose. With the dawn of its latter epoch a new power comes upon it, to find clothing and expression in new forms of speech and after a new style. The language has put its foreign decoration of lyrics and elegiac ornament ; it has found already its infinite gain in the loss of those sweet superfluous graces which encumbered the march and enchained the utterance of its childhood. The figures which it invests are now no more types of a single passion, the incarnations of a single thought. They now demand a scrutiny which tests the power of a mind and tries the value of a judgment ; they appeal to something more than the instant apprehension which sufficed to respond to the immediate claim of those that went before them. Romeo and Juliet were simply lovers, and their names bring back to us no further thought than of their love and the lovely sorrow of its end ; Antony and Cleopatra shall be before all things lovers, but the thought of their love and its triumphant tragedy shall recall other things beyond number—all the forces and fortunes of mankind, all the chance and all the consequences that waited on their imperial passion, all the infinite variety of qualities and powers wrought togethter and welded into the frame and composition of that love which shook from end to end nations and kingdoms of the earth." —*A. C. Swinburne.*

6. Humanity

"What I admire in Shakespeare, however, is that his loves are all human—no earthliness hiding itself from itself in sentimental transcendentalism—no loves of the angels, which are the least angelic things, I believe, that float in the clouds, though they do look down upon mortal feelings with contempt just as the dark volumes of smoke which issue from the long chimney of a manufactory might brood very sublimely over the town which they blacken, and fancy themselves far more ethereal than those vapours which steam up from the earth by day and night. Yet these are pure water and those are destined to condense in black soot. So are the transcendentalisms of affection. Shakespeare is healthy, true to Humanity in this.....
.....You always know that you are on an earth which

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has to be refined, instead of floating in the empyrean wings of wax. Therein he is immeasurably greater than Shelley. Shelleyism is very sublime, sublimer a good deal than God, for God's world is all wrong and Shelley is all right—much purer than Christ, for Shelley can criticize Christ's heart and life—nevertheless, Shelleyism is only atmospheric profligacy to coin a Montgomeryism. I believe this to be one of Shakespeare's most wondrous qualities—the humanity of his nature and heart. There is a spirit of sunny endeavours about him, and an acquiescence in things as they are -- not incompatible with a cheerful resolve to make them better." —*F. W. Robertson.*

7. Magic of Expression

"Let me have the pleasure of quoting a sentence about Shakespeare, which I met with by accident not long ago in the *Correspondent*, a French Review, which not a dozen English people, I suppose, look at. The writer is praising Shakespeare's prose. 'With Shakespeare', he says, 'prose comes in whenever the subject, being more familiar. is unsuited to the majestic English iambic'. And he goes on : 'Shakespeare is the king of poetic rhythm and style, as well as the king of the realm of thought, along with his dazzling prose. Shakespeare has succeded in giving us the most varied, the most harmonious verse which has ever sounded upon the human ear since the verse of the Greeks.' M. Henry Cochin, the writer of this sentence, deserves our gratitude for it : would not be easy to praise Shakespeare, in a single sentence more justly." —*M. Arnold.*

8. Humour

"Shakespeare illustrates every phase and variety of humour : a complete analysis of Shakespeare's humour would make a system of psychology."

14. SHAKESPEARE'S ENGLISH

Shakespeare's English means Elizabethan English, and there is a great difference between Elizabethan English and modern English : there is also a difference between spoken English and written English. The three general features of Elizabethan English are brevity, emphasis and tendency to interchange parts of speech. Further, there is a difference in vocabulary and also in grammar between Shakespeare's English and modern English. In Shakespeare's plays we find many words are changed in meaning, many archaic words used, many obsolete words also used, and some of the words are pronounced also in a different manner than at the present time. Words such as advised, continent, danger, discover, expect, fond, virtue, shrewd, prevent, presently, mere etc., are used in a different sense. There are many archaic words such as afeard, fill-force, happened, sonties, tranect, usance etc., which can be found in the plays. There are certain words in Shakespeare's plays such as imposition, contemplation occasions, distinct, aspect etc., which are pronounced in a different manner nowadays from the Elizabethan days. With regard to grammatical difference between Shakespeare's English and modern English K. Deighton says :

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The differences between the grammar of Shakespeare's writings and of the English of the present day are mainly due to the following facts :

1. The process by which English has changed from a highly inflected language to one with but few inflections, though far advanced in Shakespeare's time, had not gone quite so far as at present. Hence, some usages which judged by the grammatical standard of present-day English, may appear to be erroneous, are to be explained by early grammatical inflections and usages, and are, therefore, old-fashioned rather than incorrect.

2. Grammatical rules had not been fixed with their present rigidity ; indeed the first English grammar was written by Shakespeare's contemporary, Ben Jonson. Constructions now considered ungrammatical were at that time perfectly allowable, and were used by all the best writers, *e. g.*, the use of the double superlative and of the double comparative.

3. The plays of Shakespeare represent spoken language, in which ellipses and abrupt transitions are frequent. Some of apparently loose grammatical constructions in Shakespeare may possibly be due to the desire to express more vividly the ellipses and changes of constructions which occur in actual speech.

The striking features of Shakespearean grammar are (1) the frequent use of ellipses, (2) the frequent use of emphatic constructions, (3) the use of compound words, (4) the frequent interchange of parts of speech.

Deighton makes certain general remarks about Shakespeare's English.

"In the works of Shahespeare, the English language rises to its highest power and widest compass. Other writers have a recognisable and individual style, but the completeness of Shakespeare's mastery over the resources of the English language made him a master of all styles, so that in his hands, his mother-tongue was capable of expressing the whole range of feeling and of portrayin the most divergent types of character. A part of Shakespeare's mastery of the English language lay in the wide range of his vocabulary. In his works, he uses over twenty thousand different words—a vocabulary very much more extensive than that of any other writer.

The works of Shakespeare fall within the earlier part of that period of the development of the English language generally known as Modern English (from about 1500 to the present time). At his time, though the language had in the main taken on its present grammatical forms and vocabulary, there were nevertheless important differences in both these respects from the English of today. The early period of modern English is the period of experiment and comparative licence both in the importation of new words and in the formation of idioms and grammatical constructions. During this period a great change in vowel sounds, and consequentlı

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in pronunciation took place ; but as there was no corresponding change in spelling, these vowel-changes resulted in the distiribution of accents and in the division of words in syllables."

15. SHAKESPEARE'S USE OF RHYME IN HIS PLAYS

The rhymed couplet is very frequently used by Shakespeare in his plays, but the amount of rhyme slowly decreases in his later plays. So the proportion of rhymed couplets in a play is a positive sign of the period to which the play belongs. While determining the date of composition of a play one can put a question to himself :

'Is there much rhyme ? the play is early.
Is there little rhyme ? the play is late'.

In *Love's Labour's Lost,* which is supposed to be one of the earliest plays of Shakespeare, there are about two rhymed lines to every one of blank verse. In *The Comedy of Errors* there are 380 rhymed lines to 1150 unrhymed lines. In *The Tempest*, which is one of the latest plays of Shakespeare, there are only two rhymed lines.

But let us consider why Shakespeare adopted blank verse and gradually abandoned rhyme. So far as blank verse is concerned, it has the advantages of naturalness, freedom and variety over rhyme. Rhyme destroys the illusion of reality, particularly, in moments of great emotion. Rhyme is artificial ; and it constantly reminds us that a play is a fiction and not a reality. In real life, nobody speaks in rhyme. Blank verse, on the other hand, creates the illusion of reality and produces naturalness. Then again, rhyme puts a restraint upon the writer ; he is compelled sometimes to invert the order of words and even to use a less suitable word. The rhythm of the rhymed couplets confines the sense within the limits of the couplet, while blank verse allows the sense to run on with the lines. In the blank verse, the sense finds free expression while in rhymed lines the verse dominates the sense. That is why blank verse has not only naturalness but also freedom about it. Last of all, blank verse gives variety and change but rhyme produces monotony, because in rhymed lines there is a pause. either at the end of the first line or invariably at the end of the second line. There is no uniformity in blank verse as there is in rhymed lines, and consequently, rhymed lines become monotonous faster than verse. Although in a long narrative poem or in a short lyric, the rhyme, when recited, may be quite pleasing to the ear yet the sound of rhyme, in a long piece of conversation becomes monotonous.

In Shakespeare's later plays, we find rhyme only at the end of a scene or at the close of a long speech. With regard to the use of rhyme at the end of a scene Dr. Abbott remarks, 'Rhyme was often used as an effective termination at the end of the scene. When the scenery was not changed, or the arrangements were so defective that the change was not easily perceptible, it was perhaps additionally desirable to mark that a scene was finished.

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In Shakespeare's plays, rhyme often marks the close of a scene and sometimes marks leave-taking or the close of a chapter in a man's life suggesting farewell. For example, in *As You Like It*, we find Adam and Orlando using rhyme while bidding farewell to their former life. In Richard II also the favourites of the King express their feelings in rhyme meaning to say that their period of prosperity is over. In the same play, rhyme is used also to emphasise the tragedy of the close of Richard's life. In *King Lear* too the banished Kent is made to use rhyme for his leavetaking. Sometimes, even in his very late plays like *Othello* and *King Lear* Shakespeare uses rhyme for the expression of moral reflections upon life. Rhyme is surely far more impressive than blank verse or prose in proverbs and maxims and in other moral reflections.

16. SHAKESPEARE'S USE OF PROSE IN HIS PLAYS

A. W. Verity remarks about the use of prose in Shakespear's plays : "The chief use to which Shakespeare puts prose is as a conversational medium of expression. He introduces it where he wishes to lower the dramatic pitch, and does not desire a poetical effect : where in fact, he wants to convey the impression of people talking together. This use is illustrated so fully in *The Merchant of Venice* that it is needless to particularise. Attention, however, may be drawn to the interesting transitions from prose to verse and verse to prose in the same scene. These alternations are very suggestive as indications of mood or cirumstances, and the reason in each should be carefully considered. Note for instance, in 1. 3. how the heightening of the dramatic interest at Antonio's entrance is marked by the change from prose to verse. It should be observed too how characters conceived wholly in a tragic or poetic spirit (Antonio, Bassanio) speak entirely or almost entirely in verse. Bitterness and contempt, irony and wit, abruptness of thought or feeling, all find vent more naturally and pointedly in prose than verse."

Shakespeare uses prose for comic parts also. For example, Touchstone in *As You Like It* always uses prose. During the middle period of Shakespear's dramatic career we find mostly prose in the comedies. For example, *Much Ado About Nothtng* is known as a prose comedy, Shakespeare uses prose particularly as the language of the characters of humble position in his plays, such as servants, sailors, soldiers etc. Prose forms the medium of expression particularly in scenes of low life when it is also comic in tone and texture, as we find prose being used in the grave-diggers' scene in *Hamlet*, while in *The Tempest*, Stephano and Trinculo always speak in prose but Caliban invariably speaks in verse. In *Henry V*, the Hostess, Bardolph, Nym, and the Boy speak in prose because they are of humble status and also humorous. The conversation between Launcelot and his father in *The Merchant of Venice* is in prose but Bassanio answers them in verse.

Shakespeare uses prose in letters, proclamations, documents etc. and sometimes for the expression of extreme emotion and

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mental derangement. For example, Ophelia and Hamlet in *Hamlet* and Edgar in *King Lear* are made to speak in prose when they are either in extreme fits of emotion or in real or feigned fits of insanity. When Shylock speaks in the bitterest tone with the strongest emotion he speaks in prose. A. W. Verity again remarks about Shakespeare's use of prose that it increases as the character of his plays grows more varied and complex. *Richard II*, written five or six years before *Henry V* has no prose, not even in the scene III, 4 with the Gardeners which is of the same genre as the Gravediggers' scene. The amount of prose in a play, therefore, is an indication of its date, like the amount of rhyme, though not so conclusive an indication.

17. MAJOR TYPES OF PLAYS WRITTEN BY SHAKESPEARE

Shakespeare has written in all 37 plays. These plays can broadly be divided into four major types : 1. Comedies, 2. Tragedies, 3. Romances, and 4. Historical plays. Let us discuss the salient features of all these four types of plays.

1. Comedies—Shakespeare began his dramatic career with comedies. The comedies cover the first two stages in the growth of his dramatic genius. The major comedies written by Shakespeare are : *The Comedy of Errors, Two Gentlemen of Verona, Measure for Measure, The Merchant of Venice, As You Like It, Twelfth Night, A Mid-Summer Night's Dream,* and *Much Ado About Nothing.* The salient features of the Comedies are these :

(1) *Romantic Comedies*—Shakespeare's comedies are Romantic comedies. They are all stories of love, beauty and romance, finally leading to happy marriages through sincerity, devotion, sacrifice and steadfastness. They are all essentially romantic in spirit as against the classical or satirical comedies of Ben Jonson, Congreve, Sheridan or Goldsmith.

(2) *Love Stories*—All the comedies are stories of love. The path of true love never does run smooth. Therefore, in the course of love in each case difficulties, hindrances, complications and problems come. There are misunderstandings, allegations, cross-wooings and transfer of affections. But in the course of time all complications are resolved, all knots are smoothened and all misunderstandings cleared. The resolution of problems comes largely through the sincerity, devotion, loyalty and steadfastness of the heroines. In the end, happy marriages take place in an atmosphere of all-pervading joy, love and youthful gaiety.

(3) *Stories of Heroines*—The comedies are largely the stories of heroines rather than heroes. The heroines are superbly beautiful, intelligent, witty, loving and sparkling young persons. They are sincere, devoted, sacrificing and highly resourceful and adventurous young maidens

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh Adventurous young maidens

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They are all devotees of love. They carry around them a peculiarly enchanting atmosphere of love, gaiety, buoyancy, wit and humour. The heroes are equally loving devoted, steadfast and adventurous young men, but they pale into insignificance beside the heroines. It is the heroines who direct and control all the developments in the plot and it is they who finally resolve all the complications.

(4) *Romantic Atmosphere*—Finally, all the comedies are happily set in an atmosphere of romance, enchantment, pastoral woodland, old-world atmosphere, music and imaginative idealism. There is an idyllic atmosphere in most of them. Some of them, as *A Midsummer Night's Dream,* have faries, angels and sportive spirits. They export the reader or the spectator to an imaginative world of fancy, imagination and fairy-folk. They all provide a happy escape from the grim realities of life.

2. Tragedies—The tragedies belong to the third stage of growth in Shakespeare's dramatic career. The four famous tragedies that belong to this period, are *Othello, Hamlet, King Lear,* and *Macbeth.* The common characteristic features of these tragedies are these :

(1) *Stories of Suffering and Death*—The tragedies are stories of intense human sufferings and death. The hero suffers acutely simultaneously on all plains—physical, emotional, moral and spiritual. The real intensity of his tragic sufferings lies in his emotional and spiritual agony. In the existing circumstances of the hero, death comes to him more as a relief than a punishment. In the same process of suffering and moral agony the heroine also dies.

(2) *The Tragic Hero*—The Shakespearean tragedy is basically the story of the hero. The hero of the Shakespearean tragedy is a great man—an emperor, a king, a general or a commander. He is at the same time essentially a good man. But he has a tragic flaw, and the whole tragedy issues forth from that minor flaw in the heroe's character. As such, the Shakespearean tragedy is the story of the sorrows and sufferings of a good man placed amidst certain hostile circumstances with which he is incapable of dealing. Therefore, the hero enlists our deepest pity and sympathy in his sufferings and death.

(3) *Pity and Fear*—Every Snakespearean tragedy produces the twin feelings of pity and fear. Pity arises from the undeserved and unmerited sufferings of the hero, and fear from the apprehension of more sufferings to come. The fealings of pity and fear operate simultaneously These feelings refine and chasten the sensibilities of the reader and produce the Cathartic effect. Hence the Shakes pearean tragedy does not depress; it rather chastens and elevates.

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(4) *Tragic Machinery*—Every Shakespearean tragedy introduces certian factors that heighten the tragic intensity and quicken its pace.

The first amongst them is the presence and operation of a malignant fate. Every tragic hero seems to be struggling against his hostile fate which ultimately proves too strong for him. Secondly, malignant supernatural powers such as the ghosts, witches, apparitions, omens and superstitions operate in a very subtle way in pushing the hero on to the path of evil and bloodshed. The Witches in *Macbeth* and the ghost in *Hamlet* belong to this uncanny world of dread and mystery. The wild forces of nature such as tempests, rains and hailstones, earthquakes and meteors also play their role in creating and intensifying the tragic atmosphere. Madness also plays its role in most of the tragedies. Hamlet, King Lear, Lady Macbeth, Ophelia—they all go mad at one stage or the other. And finally, in all the tragedies multiple murders or deaths take place, Therefore, the final impression that every tragedy leaves is one of universal wastage of life and man's helplessness against the hostile forces of the natural and supernatural world.

3. **The Romances**—Shakespeare wrote four famous romances in the fourth and last phase of his dramatic career. The four romances are—*The Winter's Tale, Cymbeline, Pericles* and the *Tempest.* These romances make one important group characterised by certain common factors : (1) In the *first place*, all the romances begin as tragedies and develop as such to the end of the fourth Act. It is in the last Act only that the tragic catastrophe is averted and they all end happily in a renewed spirit of love, friendship, loyalty and reconciliation. (2) Higher and nobler, moral and spiritual values such as love, constancy, forgiveness, repentance, reconciliation and reunion play their role in bringing together the estranged and aggrieved parties. Therefore these plays are often called moral and spiritual allegories. (3) Children play a very vital role in all these plays. The estranged parents or friends are brought together and united in bonds of permanent love and friendship by their children. The children are born, and grow into youth—one as a prince and the other as a princess—and they fall in love with each other and finally marry. It is through their marriage that lost friendship and love are restored. (4) And finally, in all of them, sea and tempests play an important role in separating and again uniting the estranged parties. (5) Thus all the romances are sweet tragi-comedies. They are all allegorical in meaning and drive home the sublime lesson of the overall improtance of higher moral values of constancy, loyalty, repentance, forgiveness and reconciliation.

4. Historical Plays—Shakespeare also wrote in different stages of his dramatic career certain historical plays which taken together make one important group. The important historical plays are *Richard II, Henry IV—Parts I and II, Henry V, Richard III* and *Henry VIII.* Their common characteristic features are these :

(1) The historical plays belong to the medieval period of the British history, roughly from the 12th to the 15th century.

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(2) They are all largely tragic plays striking the great irony of kingship. With the exception of *Henry V*, they all end tragically. Each begins with the display of the magnificence and autocratic rule of the monarch; and each ends with the imprisonment and murder of the king.

(3) In each, the base is the historical fact, but the events of history are suitably moulded and even changed to suit the demands of the stage and dramatic effect.

(4) The queen plays an important role in each play, generally in bringing about the tragic end of the monarch.

(5) Each displays the magnificence and grandeur of medieval England, and very effectively creates an old-world atmosphere. Each is, thus, a product of the patriotic spirit that ruled supreme in the Elizabethan England.

18. SHAKESPEAREAN CRITICISM

No good writer, as Landor says, was ever long neglected, no great man overlooked by men equally great. There is abundant proof of the esteem in which Shakespeare was held in his own day. He was recognized as the greatest of them all. His writings were believed to be "such as neither Man, nor Muse can praise too much." His contemporaries had never any doubt of his greatness.

Of the contemporary comments upon Shakespeare is that of Ben Jonson which is best remembered and most quoted ; and with justice, as Jonson not only had the finest critical mind of his day, but as dramatist and poet he is so different in kind from Shakespeare that his opinion has a peculiar interest. Ben Jonson spoke of Shakespeare's works with something of the consolation that comes from superior scholarship ; just as the sense of contrast with Shakespeare also made him pride himself on the originality and construction of his plots. But no nobler tribute will ever be paid to a friend than the verses of this warm-hearted burly rival 'to the memory of my beloved, the Author, Mr. William Shakespeare, and what he hath left us. Shakespeare is admitted to have surpassed the Greek and Latin dramatists, Jonson's own masters ; he was not of an age, but for all time, and he had excelled not merely because he was the poet of nature, but by reason of his art. In private conversation, Jonson is known to have said that Shakespeare 'wanted art,' meaning thereby that he did not always take sufficient care, and Jonson has some responsibility for the statement to be found again and again, in varied words, in later critics, that there was more art in his work and more nature in Shakespeare's. It is, therefore, important to note, that in his most deliberate testimony to the genius of Shakespeare he acknowledged him to have been master of an art which no one else could reach. With all his faults Shakespeare was to Jonson the greatest of dramatists. This was the contemporary view and it was never seriously challenged throughout the seventeenth century.

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The criticism of Shakespeare, which deliberately discusses principles and determines merits, begins with Dryden. Whenever Dryden mentions Shakespeare his opinion must be treated with respect. And in particular, in weighing Dryden's opinions we must spend some time over his collection of Shakespeare and Fletcher. We must try to come to a point of understanding at which we see why it was natural and proper for him to make this frequent parallel and comparison. That is not so much a matter of wide reading or scholarship, although we must make ourselves very familiar with the plays of Fletcher, and with the plays as well as the criticism of Dryden ; it is a matter of the exercise of the critical imagination.

A dramatist himself, with a happy faculty of meeting and guiding the public taste, he was compelled to review the many problems of dramatic art that have been forced into prominence since Shakespeare's death. The Elizabethans, by the mere lapse of half a century, had come to appear somewhat antiquated : and pride in the great national tradition could not conceal its exhaustion. The old life had gone from it at the very time when the French drama, following other methods, was attaining its highest perfection. There were scholars who, like Milton in *Samson Agonistes*, went back to the Greek models. Yet other methods were found in the Spanish plays, which were well-known and even occasionally acted. The very stage had altered, with the introduction of movable scenery and the substitution of women for the Elizabethan boy-actors. The whole theory of the drama demanded scrutiny by dramatists and critics alike, and Shakespeare had to be tested by what had been achieved under different conditions elsewhere.

Dryden, with his sense of abstract form, could not bring himself to a complete surrender to the genius of Shakespeare. Dryden was the leader of the Neo-classical movement. Neo-classic criticism was guided by abstract rules of form. Neo-classic criticism wanted clarity and simplicity rather than complexity and subtlety that smacked of mystery. The effect of imagination lifts you up to a higher level of existence and the effect of reason keeps you bound to the solid earth. Dryden, the man of reason, could not be expected to appreciate Shakespeare.

Dryden felt clearly that Shakespeare had his penetration into the heart of reality. He realized that Shakespeare "comprehended all characters and passions." Being a poet, he realized quite well the greatness of Shakespeare. Yet as a critic, who believed in the Neo-classic principles, he could not accept Shakespeare as a model to be followed.

In general, Shakespeare was considered to have reached his goal by dangerous routes which he need not have taken. But the construction of his plays was not the only point at issue. The language of the Elizabethans was not old-fashioned. But the men of the Restoration were too ready to discover in it impropriety or meanness of expression. They also made the common mistake of assuming that the changes in the models of wit were refinements. The arts of

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the last age,' said Dryden, 'were yet more incorrect than their language'. Of Shakespeare, who had not neglected the taste of his audience and was always a rapid writer he had to say that "he is many times flat, insipid ; his comic wit degenerating into clenches, his serious swelling into bombast.' Dryden's charges against Shakespeare were : (i) Inequality of Shakespeare's plays ; (ii) that Shakespeare is full of bombasts ; (iii) that Shakespeare's language is obscure ; and (iv) that Shakespeare's plays had looseness of construction and some improbabilities.

Thomas Rymer was a man of considerable learning and not destitute of taste, when he "left his taste to look after itself" ; but a false theory of what drama should be, of what he *ought* to like, came very near to paralysing that function altogether, and made him the butt of his own and subsequent times. All his life, he was entirely out of sympathy with the modern drama, in France as well as in England. He held that the English should have built on the foundations of Sophocles and Euripides, or after their model, and that the chorus was the most necessary part of tragedy. He was clever and boisterously witty, but when he attacked *Othello* with ridicule he knew that it was his last weapon. He called it the 'Tragedy of the Handkerchief,' he found in it the moral that wives should look well to their linen and he summed up his censures thus : "There is in this play, some burlesque, some humour, and ramble of Comical Wit, tragical part is plainly none other than a Bloody Farce, without salt or sour."

As soon as we enter the eighteenth century we feel a change in the atmosphere of criticism and in reading the criticism itself we are aware that Shakespeare is beginning to be more read than seen upon the stage. Addison calls attention to a point of detail (the crowing of the cock in *Hamlet*) which has probably, we feel, struck him rather in the reading than at a performance ; the attention of the 18th century critics in England is rather on the poetry than on the drama. The observations of Pope are of value and interest, because they are by Pope. If other eighteenth-century critics are to be read, it is not so much for their individual contributions as a reminder that there was no period in which Shakespeare fell into neglect. There is indeed some development. Shakespeare begins to be written about in general detail and at greater length, and apart from any more general discussion of the drama, he is, in the 18th century, gradually "detached" from his environment, from the other dramatists and from a time which had become unfamiliar. Progress of far-reaching importance was made in other directions. This period gave us, in the introduction to Rowe's edition, the first biography of Shakespeare, it discussed the extent of his learning and the sources of his plots notably in Whalley's *Enquiry into the Learning of Shakespeare* (1748), Farmer's *Essay on the Learning of Shakespeare* (1767), and Charlotte Lennox's *Shakespeare Illustrated* (1753) ; above all, it began the examination of the texts of the plays and the explanation of their difficulties.

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To pass from Dryden to Johnson is to make the journey from one oasis to another. After the 'Critical Essays' of Dryden, the 'Preface to Shakespeare' by Samuel Johnson is the next of the great pieces of criticism to read.

Dr. Johnson was the exponent of common sense in life and literature. That is the merit and the defect of the criticism of Shakespeare. Johnson describes Shakespeare's plays as "compositions of a distinct kind"—not comedies, histories, or tragedies. In this connection, Johnson makes another most remarkable (but not sufficiently remarked) observation : "The players who in their edition divided our author's works into comedies, histories, and tragedies, seem not to have defined the three kinds by any very exact or definite ideas." To those who would divide periods, and segregate them into classical and romantic groups, T. S. Eliot commends the study of this sentence, and of what Johnson says afterwards about the relation of the comic, This Preface to Shakespeare was published in 1765, and Voltaire, still writing ten years and more after this event, was maintaining an opposite point of view. Johnson saw deeper than Voltaire, in this as in most matters. Johnson perceived, though not explicitly, that the distinctions of tragic and comic are superficial for us ; though he did not know that they sprang from a difference in ritual. As a poet—and he was a fine poet—Johnson is at the end of a tether. But as a critic—and he was greater as critic than as poet—Johnson has a place comparable to that of Cawley as poet.

Johnson says : "In tragedy he often writes, with great appearance of toil and study, what is written at last with little felicity ; but in his comic scenes, he seems to produce, without labour, what no labour can improve." And T. S. Eliot comments : "This is an opinion which we cannot lightly dismiss. Johnson is quite aware that the alternation of 'tragic' and 'comic' is something more than an alternation ; he perceives that something different and new is produced. 'The interchanges of mingled scenes seldom fail to produce the intended vicissitudes of passion." Through all these denominations of the drama, Shakespeare's mode of composition is the same. But why should Johnson have thought that Shakespeare's comic parts were spontaneous, and that his tragic parts were laboured ? Here, it seems to me, Johnson, by his simple integrity in being wrong has happened upon some truth much deeper than he knew. For those who have experienced the full horror of life, tragedy is still inadequate. Sophocles felt more of it than he could express, when he wrote *Oedipus the King* ; Shakespeare when he wrote *Hamlet* : and Shakespeare had the advantage of being able to employ his grave-diggers. In the end, horror and laughter have become as horrible and laughable as they can be ; and—whatever the conscious intention of the authors—you may laugh or shudder over *Oedipus*, or *Hamlet* or *Lear*—or both at once ; then only do you perceive that the aim of the comic and the tragic dramatists is the same ; they are equally serious .....All this is suggested to me by the words of Samuel Johnson ....What Plato perceived has not been noticed by subsequent

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dramatic critics ; the dramatic poet uses the conventions of tragic and comic poetry, so far as these are the conventions of his day ; there is potential comedy in Sophocles and potential tragedy in Aristophanes, and otherwise they would not be such good tragedians or comedians as they are. It might be added that when you have comedy and tragedy, united in the wrong way, or separated in the wrong way, you get sentiment of amusement. The distinction between the tragic and the comic is on account of the way in which we try to live ; when we get below it, as in *Lear*, we have an account of the way in which we do live.

Johnson refutes those critics who had thought that Shakespeare violated propriety, here and there, with his observation that Shakespeare's 'scenes are occupied only by men, who act. He does not think that Shakespeare committed' any sin by breaking the rules of the Unities. Verisimilitude, says Johnson, is the object of the Unities. Delusion, he says, is the essence of drama. If one fiction, the actor as the character impersonated, can be accepted, he asked, why cannot other fictions be accepted ? This is the sound common sense approach to literature.

"We must confess the faults of our favourite," he explained in a letter to Charles Burney, "to gain credit to our praise of his excellencies." The passage on the carelessness and inequalities, the quibbles and idle conceits, is remarkably searching, and may here and there be too strongly worded. It gives the impression that Johnson, in his scrupulous regard for truth, had tried to say the very worst that a judicious admirer could ever be forced to admit. The same reasoned impartiality which led him to describe the faults also compelled him to pronounce as high a eulogy as has ever been written on this side of idolatry. "This, therefore, is the praise of Shakespeare that he who has mazed his imagination, in following the phantoms which other writers raise up before him, may here be cured of his delicious ecstasies by reading human sentiments in human language ; by scenes from which a hermit may estimate the transactions of the world, and a confessor predict the progress of the passions." Nothing could have been better than Johnson's Preface as a balanced estimate.

Morgan's Essay, *On the Dramatic Character of Sir John Falstaff*, is the first conspicuous number of a long line on criticism dealing with the character of the personages in the plays, considering not only their action within the play itself, but inferring from their behaviour on the stage what their general character is ; that is to say, how they would behave in other circumstances. The book grew under Morgan's hands till it became more than its title promised—not merely a vindication of Falstaff's courage, but an enthusiastic exposition of the genius of Shakespeare as revealed in the minute examination of a single character. This type of criticism initiated by Morgan, reached its most precise stage in Bradley.

The first of great German critics, Lessing, tended to make of Shakespeare almost a national issue. He affirmed that English litera-

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ture, and in particular Shakespeare's was more congenial than French literature and drama to the German taste. The German critics in general insist upon the naturalness and fidelity to reality of Shakespeare's plays. Harder, a critic of considerable understanding, begins to appreciate the existence of something like a poetic pattern, in calling attention to the fitness between the passions of the personages and the scenery in which these passions are enacted. Neglecting the circumstances in which the plays are written—and indeed the historical information was not available—and playing little attention to their dramatic merits, the Germans, concentrated their attention chiefly upon the philosophical significance of character. They penetrate to a deeper level than that of the simple moral values attributed to great literature by earlier times and foreshadow 'the criticism of life' definition by Arnold. Furthermore, it is not until this period that an elements of 'mystery' is recognized in Shakespeare. That is one gift of the Romantic Movement to Shakespeare's criticism and one for which, with all its excesses, we have reason to be grateful. It is hardly too much to say that German critics and Coleridge by their criticism of Shakespeare, radically altered the reflective attitude of criticism towards poetry.

In the interval between Morgan and Coleridge the best work on Shakespeare was one by the scholars, such as, Steevens and Malone, who contributed to the elucidation of the text. They contributed so great a wealth of linguistic, antiquarian, and bibliographical knowledge that later research has done little more than supplement it.

Hazlitt's *Characters of Shakespear's Plays* (1817) was the first book in which the criticism of the century spoke clearly and confidently. But Coleridge had already been lecturing on Shakespeare for several years : and Lamb had written his magazine article on the Tragedies of Shakespeare.

These critics were possesed with all the joy of a discovery. The difference from earlier critics is obvious at a glance. There is the greater freedom of movement, the clearer signs of real pleasure in writing or speaking about Shakespeare. Enthusiasm is not checked by the desire to strike a balance ; there is no longer any fear of being misled by supersitious veneration. These critics did not hold with Johnson that it was necessary to confess faults in order to gain credit to their praise of excellences. They did not pass judgment ; they gave an interpretation. They held in Hazlitt's words, that a genuine criticism should reflect the colours, the light and shade, the soul and body of a work. The great question they set themselves to answer was not how far Shakespeare has succeeded but how Shakespeare is to be understood. The plays are regarded as embodiments of real life ; the characters are treated as fellow-beings of whom the plays preserve our only record. There is none of the aloofness which must accompany the judicial attitude of watching the craftsman at his work and noting the varying results. Johnson's main interest was in Shakespeare, the man ; the business of 19th century critics was with the world of his creation, when they studied the ordered develop-

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ment of his art and demonstrated its unity ; their attitude was the philosopher's in describing the phases of a great phenomenon in nature. It is nothing if not reverential and intuitively sympathetic. It opens new vistas and communicates a sense of exaltation and wonder.

Coleridge, the most important of them all, regards poetry as idealization of life. With his faith in the concept of 'organic form' he thinks, "Shakespeare's judgement was equal to his genius" ; the form of his drama comes from the nature of the drama itself. Coleridge helped to free Shakespearean criticism from a bondage of narrow didacticism. Coleridge makes the following important points : (i) the interest of Shakespeare's plays is independent of plot and story ; the interest centres in character ; (ii) therefore, Shakespeare lays more emphasis on expectations than on surprise ; if the character is known, his actions will also be foreseen ; (iii) juxtaposition of opposites ; Polonius in *Hamlet* is a peculiar mixture of two irreconcilables, wisdom and folly; Dogberry, the fool, behaves like a wise man in *Much Ado* ; (iv) Shakespeare kept the high road of life ; (v) interfusion of the lyric ; and (vi) ; the characters are to be inferred; they are not described.

Phychological criticism derives from Coleridge with his emphasis on character. Poetic criticism is anticipated by Coleridge. Historical criticism is initiated by Coleridge. As Eliot observes, "Hazlitt, Lamb and De Quincey do but make a constellation about the primary star of Coleridge. Their work is chiefly important as reinforcing the influence of Coleridge." Lamb enunciated the principle that Shakespeare's plays are for the study and Bradley completed the Coleridge tradition in Shakespeare's criticism.

Once the chronology of the plays had been established in its main outlines, the task of tracing Shakespeare's growth to maturity, his summits of achievement and in general the pattern of his creative career, was facilitated. In England, William Spalding, Charles Knight and Henry, Hallam, and in Germay Hermann Ulrici and G. G. Gervinus, were the chief builders of a Shakespeare whose pattern of growth could be traced in well-marked successive periods. In David Masson, in 1865, we get the first glimpses of the sentimental 'final mood of reconciliation' theory. Dowden's *Shakespeare—His Mind and Art* (1875) is the first book in English to give any thing like a unified and rounded picture of the whole achievement of the dramatist. Dowden and Furnivall went all out on the 'four-period doctrine'; and though their sentimentality, and their belief in Shakespeare's doctrine of female sweetness and purity soon earned the label of 'gush' from more sober critics, it is this sentimental picture which still largely holds the field in orthodox circles. Hand in hand with sentiment concerning Shakespeare's female characters, but in keeping with the scientific movement of the later century, went hard-headed investigation into the statistics of Shakespeare's versification, and exact measuring of his artistic process.

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The historical school, led by Stoll, considers Shakespeare's plays as a part and parcel of the dramatic tradition. Stoll suggests that Shakespeare had no interest beyond that of telling a story. The plays are often based on popular conventions—*Othello* on the convention of Calumniator Believed, *Hamlet* on Revenge of Murder, *Henry IV* on the Braggart Exposed, *Merchant of Venice* on the Jew Baited.

One of the chief critical occupations of this century was the building up of a picture of Shakespeare's personality. In their different ways Dowden, Brandes, Frank Harris, and even James Joyce in the baillant debate in *Ulysses* have attempted the task.

G. Wilson Knight is concerned primarily with the analysis of poetic symbolism, the interpretation of the plays in relation to each other and what he calls the Shakespearean progress, and the subordination of character to the poetic meaning of the play. He enunciates his principle in this way: in a drama, we are interested in the sequence of Time ; that is how we can understand plot and character ; to reach the inner layer of meaning, you have to give up temporal perception, and accept spatial perception ; then you have the proper, inter-animation of words, phrases and symbols.

The function of imagery has been studied by a number of modern critics. Caroline Spurgeon tabulated and classified the images in Shakespeare and hit upon predominant images in particular plays, to arrive at the furniture of Shakespeare's mind. Wolfgang Clemen tried to show the dramatic appropriateness of the images. If Spurgeon was more interested in the content of the images, Clemen is more interested in the form of the images.

Shakespeare has been studied in relation to his age and theatre by Thorndike, W. W. Lawrence, Farnham, O. J. Campbell, Schuking Tillyard, Hardin Craig, Theodore Spencer, G. B. Harrison, John Dover Wilson, Lily B. Campbell, Ruth L. Anderson, and Sir Edmund Chambers, Kenneth Muir, Baldwin, Noble, Fripp, G. G. Taylor and others have considered the extent of Shakespeare's learning, his sources and their relation to and influence on Shakespeare's plays. Shakespeare's craftsmanship has been studied by Moulton, Granville Barker, and Quiller-Couch.

After the contributions of Pollard, Greg, Adams, and Robertson, in the field of textual studies, correction and amendations, the New Cambridge editors are doing useful service under the able and conscientious guidance of John Dover Wilson.

[Articles by T. S. Eliot, J. Isaacs, D. Nichol Smith, Anne Ridler and Kenneth Muir have been used in the preparation of this section on Shakespearean Criticism].

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- ★ Introduction to the Play
- ★ Text with Paraphrase
- ★ Notes and Annotations
- ★ Explanations of Important Passages
- ★ Questions and Answers
- ★ Objective Questions and their Answers.

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INTRODUCTION TO THE PLAY

1. SUMMARY OF THE PLAY

ACT I

Scene 1. The scene opens in Messina (a sea-port of Sicily, an island near Italy) before the palace of Leonato, the Governor of the town. As the curtain rises, Leonato, his daughter Hero, his niece, Beatrice, are seen talking with a messenger who has just delievered Leonato a letter containing the news that Don Pedro of Arragon (a town of Spain) has won a bloodless victory over his wicked bastard brother, Don John, who had fomented a rebellion against the Prince (Don Pedro), and that Don Pedro will arrive that night in Messina. Don Pedro has also included in his letter some remarks about a young Florentine called Claudio who performed the feats of a lion in combat, despite his youth. The messenger speaks very highly about the heroism and bravery of Claudio. Leonato is glad to know that they have won a glorious victory without suffering any heavy losses, except a very few gentlemen. Besides, Don John has become reconciled to his victorious brother after his defeat.

Beatrice, the gay and sprightly niece of Leonato, now speaks and asks the messenger whether Signior Benedick of Padua has returned from the war or not. When she learns that Benedick has returned safely, she feels very happy and begins to make jests about him. She tells the messenger that when he first came to Messina, he advertised himself as a lady-killer and a great lover ; he boasts of his gallantry in battle; he has a huge appetite. Leonato steps in to inform the messenger that Beatrice and Benedick carry on 'a kind of merry war whenever they meet and that in the last encounter Benedick lost four of his five wits.

At this stage, Don Pedro, along with his bastard brother (Don John), Claudio, Benedick and Balthasar (Don Pedro's servant), arrives on the scene. He is warmly welcomed by Leonato with the words that his arrival there is pleasure for him, and when he will leave him, only sorrow and discomfort will remain with him. He requests him 'to stay for atleast a month' in his house. After this, Leonato and Don Pedro go off arm-in-arm followed by everyone else, except Claudio and Benedick. Beatrice and Benedick now begin to exchange their witty skirmishes. After sometime Don Pedro returns and inquires why his two friends have not

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entered Don Leonato's house. Benedick asks Don Pedro to command him to tell the reason, whereupon Don Pedro learns of Claudio's love for Hero, daughter of Leonato. But Benedick, the misogynist, does not see any sense in this game of love-making. Don Pedro teases Benedick that one day he will fall madly in love. Claudio, learning that Hero is Leonato's only heir requests Don Pedro to sue in his behalf for Hero's hand in marriage. At this, Don Pedro promises that he will do even more than that for him. There will be revels and dancing that night. During the masked ball Don Pedro will disguise himself as Claudio and confess his love to Hero. He will love her so passionately that she is sure to consent. He will then tell Leonato of Claudio's love, and Hero thus will be given to Claudio.

Scene 2. This scene takes place in a chamber in Leonato's palace, Leonato enters with his brother Antonio. They discuss the arrangements for the revelry at night, and Antonio assures him that his son is looking to the arrangements well, and all possible care is being taken. Antonio then speaks to him of some strange news which he has come across by chance. He says that his servant has overheard Don Pedro professes to Claudio his love for Leonato's daughter, Hero. This night at the dance he will reveal his love to Hero and inform him (Leonato) immediately. Leonato does not quite know what to say about this unexpected, though not completly unwelcome, news. So he decides to wait until Don Pedro reveals himself. But, meanwhile, he thinks it best to inform Hero of Don-Pedro's intentions so that she may give a favourable reply.

Scene 3. This scene takes place in another chamber of Leonato's house shortly before the revelry scheduled for the night. As the curtain rises, Don John and Conrade, his trusted servant, are seen in deep conversation. Conrade is trying to cheer up his master, but Don John wishes to remain sad and sullen. Conrade tactfully points out that Don John has recently 'stood out' against his brother, Don Pedro, and now that he is back in his good graces, he should try to retain his favour by being cheerful in his victor. To this request of Conrade, Don John promptly replies that he would rather be as he is, a scorned, morose individual, than a gay personality by the favour of Don Pedro. Don John cannot counterfeit a 'carriage' to acquire the good graces of anyone. Besides, he says, it fits his 'blood to be disdained of all'. He is bitter against the prince (his brother)—agianst society. He hates Claudio also, as he is the prince's friend. It is his nature to bite, for he is, as he bluntly confesses, a 'plain-dealing villain'.

When he is thus speaking, the opportunity for revenge is supplied by the news brought by Borachio, another of his followers. He (Borachio) informs Don John that, that night, the Prince will woo Hero for himself ; and having obtained her consent and that of her father, he would give her to Claudio. Don John is excited at the news, and immediately jumps at the chance of causing some trouble for Claudio, who has acquired a great amount of glory and prefer-

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ment for his part is overthrowing Don John in battle. His two trusted servants swear to help him in the mischief 'to the death'.

ACT II

Scene 1. This long scene takes place in the hall in Leonato's house, which has been decorated for the masked ball. As the curtain rises, Leonato, Antonio, Beatrice, Hero and Hero's personal servants —Margaret and Ursula—enter a little before the dance begins. Leonato enquires if Don John was present at the 'great supper'. At this, Beatrice remarks that Don John looks very tartly, and whenever she looks at him, she has 'heart-burn' for an hour afterwards. Hero, too, agrees, that he has a very melancholy disposition. He is rather ill-tempered. Beatrice remarks that the perfect man would be the one who combines some of Don John's silence and a portion of Benedick's chattering. Such a man would win any woman in the world if he has a good leg for dancing and enough money in his purse. Leonato chides Beatrice saying that she is too shrewish, to which she replies that God will not send her a husband because she is so 'curst' ('God sends a curst cow short horns'). Beatrice then remarks that she thanks God every morning and evening for not sending her a husband. As a punishment for dying unwed, she says, she will lead apes into hell. However, her trip to hell must stop at the gate, for the devil will send her to heaven because there is no room in hell for maids. Once she is in heaven, St. Peter will show her where the bachelors (of both sexes) stay, and together they will all be merry, as the day is long. Besides, Beatrice warns Hero to be careful in choosing her husband. She should marry a man of her own liking, and make sure that he really loves her ; for men are passionate at the time of courting, but repentence soon follows, if their love is not true and sincere.

The revellers now arrive and they all put on their masks. The hall is a large one, and they dance in pairs in different parts of it. Don Pedro and Hero dance in one part of the hall. Don Pedro starts wooing Hero as Claudio's proxy. He leads her out for a dance, draws her aside and enters into conversation with her to make love to her on behalf of Claudio. Balthazar and Margaret form another pair of dancers, and a third is formed by Antonio and Ursula. It is now the turn of Benedick to pair himself off with Beatrice. Benedick takes advantage of his disguise and tells her that Beatrice is disdainful and that she has all her wit borrowed from Hundred Merry Tales (a book of coarse humour). She at once decides that only Benedick would say such a thing about her. She then says that Benedick is the 'Prince's jester, a very dull fool'. His greatest gift is to cook up 'slanders' which only 'libertines' like him delight in, and he is more villainous than witty.

After the dance is over, all make their exist except Don John, Borachio and Claudio. Don John remarks loudly, for Claudio to hear, that he thinks Don Pedro is in love with Hero and has taken Leonato aside to ask for her hand in marriage. Don John, pretending that he is talking to Benedick (Claudio is wearing a mask), asks

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Claudio to convince Don Pedro not to marry Hero, who is below him in birth. Claudio asks Don John how he has come to know that Don Pedro loves Hero. Don John replies that his brother himself told him so. Borachio says that he also heard Don Pedro swear he would marry Hero that very night. At this, the credulous Claudio believes at once that he has been betrayed in the basest manner possible by his friend and patron (Don Pedro). His heart is broken. "Friendship is constant in all other things/Save in the office and affairs of love", He says. Everyone should 'negotiate' for himself, because beauty has the magic power to convert the best intentions of a friend into passionate love. He bids Hero farewell. At this point Benedick arrives and teases Claudio about how sad he looks. He jokes that the Prince 'hath got your Hero'. At this Claudio replies, 'I wish him joy of her'. Then Benedick asks if Claudio really thinks that the Prince is deceiving him. Claudio is deeply hurt by this remark, and he goes away. Left alone Benedick muses on what Beatrice had told him, that he was reputed to be the Prince's Jester. He soon realises that Beatrice herself has invented the lie to spite him. So he decides to have his revenge upon her.

Now Don Pedro, Hero and Leonato enter and the Prince asks Benedick about Claudio. Benedick tells the Prince that Claudio thinks that he (the Prince) has stolen Hero. At this Don Pedro assures Benedick that he has no intention of marrying Hero himself ; he has merely courted her on behalf of his friend ; and it is Claudio who would marry her, for her father has consented to the match. Meanwhile enter Claudio, Beatrice, Hero and Leonato. Seeing Beatrice, Benedick goes away in a hurry. Now the Prince and Beatrice both laugh at Claudio's jealousy. The Prince informs Claudio that he has wooed Hero for him and Leonato has given his consent to her marriage with him. Hearing this, Claudio can hardly speak, but finally he says "Silence is the perfectest herald of joy". Beatrice is much delighted with this welcome news of her cousin's happiness. While the two young lovers are whispering to each other, Beatrice sighs and exclaims that she alone may 'sit in a corner and cry' heigh-ho' for a husband. But, when Don Pedro asks her if she would marry him, she refuses to marry him and then departs from the scene. Don Pedro (the Prince) then talks of a plan by which they may make Beatrice and Benedick fall in love with each other. All—Leonato, Claudio and Hero, agree to further his plan.

Scene 2. This scene opens in a room in Leonato's house. Don John and his trusted follower, Borachio talk about Claudio's marriage with Hero. Borachio says that he can easily thwart the marriage. At this, Don John maliciously replies that 'Any bar, any cross, any impediment will be medicinable to me', and asks him the way. Borachio tells him that at a late hour of the night, he would so manage the matters that Margaret, Hero's maid, would talk to him from the window of Hero's bed-room. She would address him as Claudio, and he would address her as Hero. Meanwhile, according to Borachio's instructions, Don John would go to the Prince and

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Claudio and accuse Hero of being in a 'contaminated stale', that is, immoral and corrupt—a prostitute. To prove his charge, he should hide them in the garden where they would be able to hear their conversation but not see them because of the darkness of the night. In this way they would be convinced of the immorality and unfaithfulness of Hero, and the marriage would be broken up. Don John is very pleased at this scheme and offers Borachio a thousand ducats if it is carried out successfully.

Scene 3. As the curtain rises, Benedick is seen alone in the garden of Leonato. He is brooding over the recent foolishness of Claudio's unaccountable love for Hero. He is amazed to find that even a sensible man like Claudio, is eager to marry. This is the very man who never bothered himself about love and who spent all his time in material sports. Who could ever have thought that such a man should now be victimised by love ? Love has entirely transformed Claudio. At this strange transformation of Claudio, Benedick doubtfully asks himself, "Is it possible that I should ever be so changed ?" and is unable to answer himself with a definite 'No'. But he is positive that unless a woman is rich, virtuous, wise, fair, mild, good at pleasant talk and musically-minded, he is not going to budge from the position taken up by him. His musing is interrupted by the arrival of Don Pedro, Claudio, Balthazar and Leonato. Seeing them Benedick hides himself behind an arbour to overhear their talk. But he is nonetheless, observed by the Prince and his companions, totally unaware of the fact that they had come on purpuse to entrap him.

Balthazar begins with a song on the changeful nature of men's love. This is much appreciated by the Prince who asks him to get ready for 'excellent music' that night at Hero's chamber-window. On the departure of Balthazar, the Prince begins to work the scheme to entrap Benedick. He says to Leonato, "Come hither, Leonato. What was it you told me of today ? That your niece Beatrice was in love with Signior Benedick ?" Claudio urges them on and says, "I did never think that the lady would have loved any man." To which Leonato replies, "No, nor I neither, but most wonderful that she should so dote on Signior Benedick, whom, she hath in all outward behaviours, seemed ever to abhor." Thus, they are agreed that love has taken possession of her so much that they are afraid that she would die in grief or do some desperate outrage to herself. And they decide not to tell Benedick about her love because he would probably make sport of her affection. She is sweet, pretty and virtuous lady whose only fault is loving Benedick. Benedick becomes immediately interested and wonders if all this talk is not a trick. But Leonato, 'the white-bearded fellow' is also a party to it, and so it must be true. Claudio notes that Benedick has taken the infection. And, as they depart, Don Pedro advises Leonato to have Hero and her gentle women play the same trick on Beatrice.

After their departure, Benedick comes out of his hiding and remarks that the conversation cannot be a trick, since they seemed so serious. So he is now convinced that Beatrice is indeed in

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love with him, and that there is no other way out except to requite her love. No sooner has he made up his mind, than Beatrice herself appears before him to invite him to dinner. He notes 'some marks of love in her', so he says, "Fair Beatrice, I thank you for your pains." Beatrice replies that she would not have come if it had been painful. Benedick asks her if she gets pleasure in coming to him to deliver the message. Beatrice answers that she takes as much pleasure in delivering the message as one can take at the point of a knife. After this short conversation Beatrice goes away and Benedick interprets everything that falls from her lips in the light of the present state of his mind, and concludes that she loves him. He, therefore, decides to take pity upon her and return her love saying, "If I do not take pity on her, I am a villain ; if I do not love her, I am a Jew".

ACT III

Scene 1. This scene is a counterpart of the previous scene. It shows the working of the plot against Beatrice. It begins with the coming of Hero, with Margaret and Ursula, into the garden of her house. Hero tells Margaret to go to Beatrice and inform her quietly that both—Hero and Ursula—are talking about her in the garden. She should also tempt her to come into the garden, hide herself in the pleached bower, and overhear their conversation. As soon as Margaret is gone, Hero instructs Ursula to praise Benedick whenever his name is mentioned. Hero's talk will be how 'sick in love with Beatrice' Benedick is. In this way, they would make Beatrice fall in love with Benedick.

On being informed, Beatrice soon arrives, and thinking that she has not been seen by Hero and Urasula, hides herself in the bower, and overhears all that they talk about Benedick and his love for her. Meanwhile Hero remarks that Beatrice is 'too disdainful' and her spirits are as wild as the 'haggards' (hawks) of the rocks. Ursula asks Hero if she is sure that Benedick truly loves Beatrice. Hero replies that it is certain because the Prince and Claudio told her so. But in the eyes of Beatrice there are always 'disdain' and 'scorn'. "Nature never framed a woman's heart of prouder stuff than that of Beatrice," remarks Hero. Beatrice would probably make report of Benedick's love, if she knew of it. She always spels a man 'backward', no matter how many remarkable qualities he may have. No doubt, Benedick is the best youngman in Italy, wise, noble, valiant, young and rarely featured in body ; but Beatrice turns 'every man the wrong side out'. It is, therefore, best to let Benedic pine away than reveal his love, lest he die from mockery. Ursula begs Hero to tell Beatrice, but Hero is adamant. She says that she will go to Benedick and try to dissuade him from loving Beatrice by fashioning some 'honest slanders' against her, but Ursula objects to this. Thus producing some passionate effects upon Beatrice, they leave the stage.

After they have gone, Beatrice comes out from her hiding. She is upset by the 'fire in mine ears'. That is, the talk that has made her ears

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burn. She has heard that she stands 'condemned for pride and scorn.' She, therefore, immediately bids contempt and maiden pride farewell, and decides to requite the love of Benedick. She now believes that Benedick is a most deserving man ; and she vows to let her wild heart he tamed by the 'loving hand' of Benedick.

Scene 2. This scene opens in a room in Leonato's house where the Prince (Don Pedro) informs Leonato, Claudio and Benedick that he would go to Arragon as soon as the marriage of Claudio and Hero is performed. At this Claudio proposes to accompany him, but the Prince turns down the offer saying that this would mean depriving him of the new gloss of his marriage. He would rather have Benedick who is all mirth, and what his heart thinks his tongue speaks. At this, Benedick remarks that he is not what he used to be. Leonato pretends that he certainly looks much sadder, and Claudio remarks that perhaps he is in love. Benedick denies this and pretends that he looks sad merely because he suffers from toothache. Claudio asserts that he (Benedick) must be in love, for he has begun to dress in a very fantastic manner, rub himself with civet (a sweet perfume), and apply cosmetics. But the question is whom he loves. They all add that they know of a person who loves Benedick so much that she can now be said to be dying for him. At this stage Benedick who is the victim of his good-humoured raillery, walks away with Leonato with whom, he says, he has a few words to speak. At this the Prince and his friends conclude that Benedick has taken Leonato aside to speak to him about Beatrice.

At this stage when the Prince (Don Pedro) and Claudio are left alone, the scoundrel, Don John, comes forward with his infamous scheme to poison their minds regarding the chastity of Hero. He tells them that Claudio must not marry Hero tomorrow, for she is unfaithful, immoral—rather a common prostitute. He offers to show them ample proof of this that very night. If they come with him into the garden at a late hour of the night, they will see her meeting with a love, and 'her chamber window entered', to-night, the very night before her marriage. They do not want to believe that such a thing can be possible, but Don John tells them to wait until they have seen it all with their own eyes. Claudio swears that if this terrible information comes out to be true, he would disgrace Hero in the Church, where he was to be married to her, before the entire congregation. Don Pedro says that he will also join with Claudio to disgrace her if she is untrue. They leave broken-heart at the sudden turn of events. Don John remarks that he has done them a great service.

Scene 3. This scene takes place later that night, in a street not far from Leonato's house. As the curtain rises, Dogberry (the head-watchman) is seen giving instructions to his companion Verges and other watchmen. And having told them their respective duties, in particular that they should keep watch over Leonato's house where there is a great activity that night, he goes away. He leaves them with the command : "Be vigilent, I beseech you".

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The members of the watch now go and sit on a church-bench. Meanwhile Conrade and Borachio enter. Seeing them the watchmen hide in order to overhear Borachio's tale. Borachio tells Conrade that he has been paid one thousand ducats by Don John for performing a villainous plot. He so arranged matters that Margaret talked to him from the window of the bedroom of Hero. He addressed her as Hero and she addressed him as Claudio. The Prince and Claudio overheard their conversation, but, due to the darkness of the night, they could not see and recognise them. Rather they took Margaret to be Hero. Borachio further reveals that Claudio swore he would disgrace Hero before the congregation next morning, at the church, by refusing to marry her.

The watchmen overhear the above confession ; and thinking it to be a villiany, they disclose themselves and arrest both Borachio and Conrade. The watchmen decide to call up Dogberry because they have "recovered the most dangerous piece of lechery that ever was known in the common-wealth." So the watchmen take them to Dogberry. Both of them (Borachio and Conrade) go off meekly with the watch.

Scene 4. This short scene is laid in Hero's apartment. It is the morning of the wedding-day. Hero and Margaret are discussing upon the best dress she (Hero) should wear on her wedding-day. What ornaments and what particular dress would suit her best as a bride ? Different ornaments, head-dresses and other articles of dress are tried one after another ; and in this way a selection is made. She even calls Beatrice to advise her in the matter. Beatrice comes but her voice is so odd that Hero wonders why she speaks in the 'sick tune' and looks exceedingly ill. Margaret in her light-hearted manner and usual bantering style asks her to get some 'distilled Carduus Benedictus' (a herb which is a panecea for any disease under the sun), with a pun, of course, on the name 'Benedick' and lay it to her heart. She (Margaret) also adds that a similar change like hers has also comeover the professed marriage-hater, Benedick.

By this time Ursula breathlessly exclaims that the Prince, Claudio, Benedick, Don John 'and all the gallants of the town are come to fetch you to church.' Hero withdraws to the dressing-room in order to get ready for the ceremony.

Scene 5. This scene takes place in another room of Leonato's house. Early in the morning, when the bride (Hero) is dressing up for the wedding, Dogberry and Verges come to inform Leonato of the villainous plot performed by Borachio and Conrade the previous night. But they are so tedious and long winded in the telling of their story that Leonato is unable to get any information from them relevant to Hero and Claudio, except that they had arrested a couple of arrant knaves—Borachio and Conrade. They want him to examine the culprits. But, as Leonato is busy with the arrangements for the marriage of his daughter, he tells them to examine themselves and bring the report to him. And bidding farewell to them, he proceeds to the church where the marriage party is waiting for him.

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ACT IV

Scene 1. This scene takes place in a church where Claudio and Hero are to be married by the priest or the friar, in the presence of their friends and relatives—Leonato, Don Pedro (The Prince), Don John, Benedick, Beatrice and attendants. Advised by Leonato to be brief regarding the actual ceremony of the marriage, Francis (the priest) proceeds at once to pronounce the marriage ceremony. Upon this, the Friar asks Claudio whether he has come to marry the lady, Hero ; to which he replies in negative denouncing Hero as corrupt and immoral. He compares her to a rotten orrange which is good to look at but rotten within. He means that Hero is beautiful to look at, but, in reality, she is corrupt, rotten within. Her blushes are signs of guilt, not of innocence. He accuses her of having known the 'heat of a luxurious bed'. At this Hero is struck dumb ; she cannot answer the charge. Leonato thinks that perhaps Claudio has already taken her virginity, so he is now accusing her of being unchaste. Claudio says that this is not the case, but that Hero is wanton. Leonato appeals to Don Pedro to intervene. But the Prince also openly condemns Hero and says that he feels himself dishonoured to link a dear friend of his with a common prostitute. He tells Leonato upon his honour that he himself, his brother (Don John), and the aggrieved Claudio have seen Hero talk to a ruffian at her chamber-window the previous night. Don John too confirms this and says that Hero's evil deeds are too offensive to be uttered. Claudio then swears that he will never again fall in love with any woman and that his thoughts will henceforth be full of suspicion. At this, Leonato calls for someone to end his life on the spot. Hero faints from the shock ; and, on the advice of Don John, the three accusers go away. Now Benedict and Beatrice look after Hero and try to revive her, but Leonato wishes for Hero's death. He cries out that he is sorry he had loved her so dearly and took pride in her. As she has brought shame upon him and his family, he himself might kill her if she should revive. Beatrice advises patience. She is sure that her cousin has been 'belied'. Still Leonato is not convinced of the innocence of his daughter.

By this time Hero recovers from her swoon; and the friar convinced of her innocence by the anguish and the blushes on her face, comes to rescue her. He now suggests that Hero should be publicly declared to be dead of shame, as this deception will give Claudio time to think about how beautiful Hero's life was. Claudio will mourn for her and, perhaps, soon the truth will be known. But, as a last resort, if the deception does not turn out for the best, Hero can enter a convent to be kept concealed in 'some reclusive and religious life' beyond the reach of scornful looks and remarks. The grief-stricken father (Leonato) accepts the advice of the friar. Benedick also pledges his honour to deal justly with the whole matter and keep the supposed death of Hero a secret from the Prince and Claudio, his friend.

All then go away except Benedick and Beatrice who is in tears at the disgrace of her cousin. She is sure that Hero is innocent and

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that she has been falsely accused and slandered. And, with true maidenly modesty and coyness, she gives sufficient indication that she would love Benedick if only he would right the wrongs done to her cousin. She commands Benedick, "Kill Claudio." Benedick hesitates for a moment, for Claudio is his friend, but he is so much in love with Beatrice that he ultimately agrees to challenge him (Claudio) to a duel.

Scene 2. This short scene deals with the examination of the culprits—Borachio and Conrade. Dressed in their robes of office Dogberry, Verges and the Sexton (town clerk), accompanied by the members of the Watch, enter the prison to examine the two accused prisoners.

By the examination of the two culprits and the evidences of the watchmen before the Sexton the villainous plot is fully revealed. It is now clear that Hero had been falsely disgraced and accused. The plot is further confirmed by the fact that Don John, on hearing of the arrest of his two followers, stole away secretely from Messina that morning. The Sexton now proceeds to Leonato's house to report to him the confession of the accused asking the two constables to bind the criminals and take them before Leonato.

ACT V

Scene 1. This scene opens in Leonato's house where Antonio (Leonato's brother) is seen trying to console Leonato, by wise proverbs and maxims. But Leonato is not to be consoled by the kind of comfort the world can bring to him. Those who themselves have not suffered, can easily find maxims and proverbs to console the afflicted; but they will not find any comfort in them, if they themselves were to suffer. If any one who has suffered like him, who has lost a dearly loved child as he has lost, whose child has been slandered and disgraced as his own has been, and if such a one is patient and self-controlled, he would follow his example and he comforted by him. Then Antonio suggests that Leonato should use his grief not against himself, but against his enemies who have wronged him and his daughter. This advice appeals to him, and he now determines to have his revenge upon them by punishing them sufficiently.

Just then the two offenders, Claudio and the Prince, arrive on the scene. Leonato challenges Claudio to answer with the sword the great injury he and his friend, Don Pedro, have done to his daughter, Hero, by slandering her character. Antonio also challenges Claudio to a duel. Now Don Pedro says that although he is sorry for Hero's death, he maintains that she was charged with 'nothing' that was not substantially true and very full of proof. At this, both the brothers leave the scene to prepare themselves for the duel.

By this time enters Benedick who has already taken a pledge to be Hero's champion. He too asks Claudio and the Prince whether he should draw his sword to give them an appropriate reply for having killed Hero. But Claudio and the Prince (Don Pedro) make fun of

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the usually light-hearted Benedick for his sudden exhibition of temper; and they attribute his changed manners to his love for Beatrice. Benedick gets angry and leaves them to get ready for a fight.

Soon after the departure of Benedick, Dogberry and Verges appear on the scene, followed by Borachio and Conrade with their hands bound. Don Pedro is very much surprised to find two of his brother's men bound in this way. He asks the Head Constable about the offence of the two prisoners. Borachio himself confesses to him the whole crime—how Don John had induced him to slander the lady Hero and how he successfully duped the Prince and Claudio by showing himself in conversation with Margaret, dressed in Hero's clothing, from her chamber-window. Both the Prince and Claudio are horrified to hear the villainy which is confirmed by the flight of their master, Don John. Claudio is heart-broken and exclaims, "Sweet Hero, now thy image death appears in the rare semblance that I loved it first."

About this time, Leonato and Antonio return. The Prince (Don Pedro) and Claudio now plead that they sinned not but in mistaking and ask for Leonato's forgiveness. Both of them swear to suffer any penance which the old man (Leonato) may impose on them. Leonato asks them to inform the people of Messina of the exact truth about Hero's death. He requires Claudio to "hang some verses as epitaph upon her tomb", and to marry his brother's daughter in place or Hero, the next morning. To this Claudio readily agrees.

Scene 2. This short scene opens in Leonato's garden where Margaret and Benedick meet. Benedick requests her to call Beatrice so that he may have a few words with her. Margaret promises to arrange a meeting between them provided that he writes a beautiful poem in praise of her (Margaret's) beauty. When Benedick agrees to comply with her request, she goes away to send Beatrice to him. Benedick praises the interval by singing a love-song. When Beatrice enters, there is a quick exchange of witty words between the two lovers. Meanwhile Ursula comes and informs them that Hero has been proved to be innocent and that the real culprit, Don John, who had deceived Claudio and the Prince, has fled and gone away. The two lovers now hurry to Leonato's house to know further details about this welcome news.

Scene 3. This scene is laid in the church where the members of Leonato's family are buried. Claudio goes to the family vault of the church alongwith Don Pedro and a few torch-bearers and musicians that night. Then Claudio hangs a penetential epitaph on Hero's supposed tomb, written out on a scroll. The epitaph states that she who was killed by 'slanderous tongues' will live 'in death with glorious fame'. After hanging the epitaph, he commands the musicians to perform the song composed especially for this occasion. The song states that those who caused Hero's death are deeply repentant. After the song Claudio swears that he will perform this rite each year. Then they proceed to the house of Leonato as the dawn is drawing near to keep the promise of marriage with Hero's cousin.

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Scene 4. This scene opens in a room of Leonato's house where Leonato, Hero, Benedick, Beatrice, the Friar and others—all are waiting for the arrival of Claudio and Don Pedro. The Friar is pleased that all has worked out well, as he knew it would. Benedick is also happy because he does not have to fight with Claudio in a duel, the consequences of which might have been fatal. As the time for the arrival of Claudio and the Prince is drawing near, Leonato asks the girls to withdraw into a chamber and to come back wearing masks when they are sent for. Benedick now requests the Friar to bind him and Beatrice in the marriage tie; and he agrees to do so most willingly. In the meantime Claudio and the Prince arrive.

After the arrival of Claudio with the Prince, Antonio enters with all the girls, who are wearing masks. He (Antonio) gives Hero to Claudio as his wife, but Leonato refuses to let the young Count (Claudio) see his future wife's face until he has sworn to marry her. Claudio agrees and he says to the masked lady, "Give me your hand before this holy friar ; I am your husband, if you will marry me." The Friar then joins their hands and Hero takes off her mask. Claudio is struck by the resemblance of his new bride to Hero. Don Pedro is equally amazed and exclaims, "Is not this Hero—Hero that was dead ?" To this question Leonato replies, "She died, my lord, but while her slander lived." The Friar offers to explain to them the whole mystery about this second Hero after the holy rites of marriage are soleminised. After this, the marriage of Beatrice with Benedick is also decided when Hero and Claudio bring forth love-sonnets that the two had written about each other. They are genuinely in love with each other ; so Beatrice now allows herself to be kissed by Benedick, to ratify their mutual love. The whole party now has a dance before the happy marriages are solemnized. Just then news is brought by a messenger that Don John has been arrested and brought back to Massina. But the merry party goes ahead with music and dance, leaving the question of punishing Don John to the next day. Nothing is permitted to spoil the gaiety of the merry hour.

2. SHAKESPEARE'S LANGUAGE

Use of Prose and Verse in 'Much Ado About Nothing.'—Shakespear has a wonderful mastery over the English languange. He has a wonderful skill in using a 'measured and unmeasured' language to express a variety of feelings and thoughts. He has a special skill to coin poetic phrases, 'which have become household words in the English language and which will live as long as the English language lives". "All notes and all stops are at his command—from the majesty of 'this royal throne of England,' this sceptred isle, to the simplicity of 'the quality of mercy' is not strained, from the mystery of in the dark background and abyss of time' to the moving cadence of 'we are such stuff as dreams are made on, and our little life is rounded with a sleep' ; from the bravery of 'I dare do all that may become a man' to the dramatic pathos of 'Finish

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good lady, the bright day is done, and we are for the dark'; from the whispered dread of 'Undiscovered country from whose bourn, no traveller returns' to the sweet music of 'Night's candles are burnt out and jocund day stands tiptoe on the misty mountain's tops.' There was nothing within the range of human thought, within the horizon of intellectual effort, that he did not touch. He knew the brain and the heart of man and theories, customs, superstitions, hopes, fears, hatreds, vices and virtues of the human race."

"He knew the thrills and ecstasies of Love,
The savage Joys and the Hatred and the Revenge;
He heard the hiss of Envy's snakes;
He watched the eagles of Ambition soar;
There was no hope that did not put its star
Above his head, no Fear he had not felt,
No Joy that had not shed its sunshine on his face."

Shakespeare is a poet, a supreme poet. He is a dramatist, a supreme dramatist. He has a magic power over words. They come to him at his bidding and know their places. "They are struck at a heat, on the spur of the occasion and have all the truth and the vividness which arise from the actual impression of the objects. His epithets and single phrases are like sparkles thrown off from the imagination fired by the whirling rapidity of its own motion. His language is hieroglyphical. It translates thought into visible images. It abounds in sudden transitions and elliptical expressions. This is the source of his mixed mataphors which are only abbreviated forms of speech. In Shakespeare any other word but the true one is sure to be wrong. If anybody, for instance, could not recollect the words of the following description—

'Light thickens,
And the crow makes wing to the rocky wood,'

he would be greatly at a loss to substitute others for them equally expressive of the feeling. These remarks are, however, strictly applicable only to the impassioned parts of Shakespeare's language, which flowed from the warmth of imagination and were his own."

Shakespeare's poetry is nature as well as art—it is nature that is art and art that is nature. Speaking on the qualities of the poet of nature, that Shakespeare is, Hazlitt writes, "The poet of nature is one who from the elements of beauty, of power, and of passion in his own breast, sympathises with whatever is beautiful and great and impassioned in nature in its simple majesty, in its immediate appeal to the senses, to the thoughts and hearts of all men; so that the poet of nature by the truth and depth and harmony of his mind may be said to hold communion with the very soul of nature; to be identified with and to foreknow and to record the feeling of all men and at all times and places, as they are liable to the same impression; and to exert the same impressions; and to exert the same power over the minds of his readers that nature does. He sees things in their eternal beauty, for he sees them as they are; he feels

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them in their universal interest, for he feels them as they affect the first principles of his and our common nature. Such was Homer, such was Shakespeare, whose works will last as long as nature, because they are a copy of the indestructible forms and everlasting impulses of nature welling out from the bosom as from a perennial spring or stamped upon the senses by the hand of the maker. The power of imagination in them is the representative power of all nature. It has its centre in the human soul and makes the circuit of the universe."

From a close study of the language of Shakespeare in his plays, we can speak of it under the threefold distinction of earlier, middle and later styles. "In the earliest plays," says Dowden, the language is sometimes as it were a dress but on the thought—a dress ornamented with superfluos care ; the idea is at times hardly sufficient to fill out the language in which it is put ; in the middle plays (*Julius Caesar* serves as an example) there seems to be perfect balance and equality between the thought and its expression. In the latest plays, this balance is disturbed by the preponderance or excess of ideas over the means of giving them utterance. The sentences are close-packed, there are rapid and abrupt turnigs of thought, so quick that language can hardly follow fast enough ; impatient activity of intellect and fancy, which having once disclosed an idea, cannot wait to work it orderly out."

Much Ado About Nothing, which is a middle play, is a prose comedy. It is the comedy of a poet. Lyly was the first man to use prose in a comedy. But, unlike Shakespeare, Lyly's prose is too artful and too elaborate; Shakespeare's, on the other hand, is natural and dramatic. His prose is real prose. The following is an excellent example of Shakespeare's prose. This relates to a complaint about the taunts of Beatrice at the masked ball. Benedick says :—

"O ! she misused me past the endurance of a block, an oak but with one green leaf on it, would have answered her ; my very visor began to assume life and scold with her : she told me, not thinking I had been myself, that I was the prince's jester ; that I was duller than a great thaw, huddling jest upon jest ; with such impossible conveyance upon me, that I stood like a man at a mark, with a whole army shooting at me. She speaks poniards, and every word stabs : if her breath were as terrible as her terminations, there were no living near her, she would infect to the north star. I would not marry her, though she were endowed with all that Adam had left him before he transgressed : she would have made Hercules turned spit, yea, and have cleft his club to make the fire too....."

—*Act II. Scene i.*

When a situation grows tense or the dialogue develops into a serious one Shakespeare's expression shifts from prose to verse. Verse, though very scant in *Much Ado About Nothing*, is used only when the dialogue takes an emotional turn and there is an outburst of passion. In Act I, Scene i, Benedick's emotion changes his dialogue

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into verse. Similarly, Claudio's passion for Hero takes him to the use of verse. But, compared to the prose of the play, its verse is but poor and feeble. Much of the verse is absurdly rhetorical. "Nearly all the verse passages of *Much Ado* are concerned directly or indirectly with Claudio-Hero story, a story which is too feeble in substance to be tragic, and too tragic in treatment to be romantic. The verse is thus placed at a cruel disadvantage : the more it moves, the less we like it. Let us agree then, that the real excellence of *Much Ado* is in its prose ; that the play is an admirable prose comedy, implicated with a much less admirable serious story in verse."

There are barely six-hundred lines of metrical writing. They are mostly in blank verse. Nearly "two-thirds of *Much Ado About Nothing* is in prose. Shakespeare's choice of prose or verse is determined in the play primarily by considerations of the dominant sentiment of each situation. Prose presents the language of ordinary life, it appeals to the intellect, and is, therefore, used for formal preliminaries, comic dialogue and commonplace conversation, *i.e.*, by vulgar persons habitually and by gentle-folks in matters of business and light and familiar talk. Verse is a more heightened and conventional mode of speech, and so is used when there is an appeal to emotion or imagination by gentle-folks in their serious moments. Hence generally, the serious parts are in verse, except Act II, Scene ii, comic in prose, except Act III, Scene i, The former is a vulgar plot concocted in cold blood between familiars, the chief character is a low fellow. The latter is in verse, to contrast it more effectively with the parallel scene Act II, Scene iii, a sweeter and more serious tone is assumed ; Hero is the chief speaker. Changes within the same scene are more instructive. In Act I, Scene i, Claudio tells his tale of love in verse ; in Act II, Scene i, when he thinks himself betrayed, he soliloquizes in verse ; the verse of the poetic interlude in Act II, Scene iii, marks the passing of mood inspired by music and evening stillness. In the church-scene formal prose is soon flung aside, and the emotion rises till it passes of in a solemn quatrain. It breaks out again in Act V, Scene i, dropping on Leonato's exit, but rising at once on Borachio's confession and enveloping Borachio himself, who has hitherto spoken only in prose. Dogberry alone remains on the pedestrial level and drags Leonato down to it, The verse of the last scene balances that of the church-scene. Benedick uses prose even to make love to Beatrice and to challenge Claudio ; the former relations of these characters have placed them, as it were, on a prose footing. Prose is Benedick's natural speech : he abandons it only in Act IV, Scene i and Act V, Scene iv, his description of it at Act V, Scene iv, line 91 marks that he is himself again.'—(J. C. Smith.)

3. THE TITLE OF THE PLAY

Critics have advanced various theories explaining the appropriateness of the title of the play. Some of them are much too clever

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and ingenious to give a clear rational and adequate explanation of the dramatist's intention while some are quite satisfactory. Let us examine the former first.

The German critic Ulrichi finds in the title a reference to the "internal contradiction into which all human existence falls.....when man treating important things with playful levity, recklessly follows his momentary impulses, feelings and caprices." It is said that when Shakespeare wrote his "romantic comedies" he was in a mood of gay abandon which induced him to give these plays playfully imaginative title, such as, *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, *As You Like It*, *Twelfth Night or What You Will*, *Measure For Measure*, *All's Well That Ends Well*, etc. While in such a mood he was looking at the world rather obliquely. It is this that perhaps explains why 'the reflex irony' with which he brings 'these light wares' to market, as another German critic explains.

Equally ingenious is this latter view of the German critic (Oeschelhauser, for instance) of attaching no significance to the title, dismissing it as merely out of "these humorous devices faintly tinged with the reflex irony, with which Shakespeare was wont to bring his lighter wares to the market."

Another critic, Grant While, explains that he intended a pun on the words 'nothing' and 'nothing' pronounced alike in Elizabethan times. In support of his argument White refers, in particular, to the somewhat laboured series of puns in II, iii. 48-50.

D. Pedro—Or if thou wit hold longer argument.
Do it in notes.

Balthasar— Note this before my notes.
There's not a note of mine that's worth the noting.

From this White advances the theory that the play is made up of "much ado about nothing" (—watching or observing), as all the characters are engaged in watching each other. "Hero's sufferings come from nothing,—by her uncle's servant, by Claudio, and by Don Pedro : her obedience and happiness to be the noting of the watch ; and Benedick and Beatrice are brought together by secretly noting what their friends plot that they should note ; and yet the principal serious accident, the accusation of Hero, about which there is so much ado, rests upon noting."

All these theories are much too clever and ingenious and as such, beside the point. A more satisfactory explanation of the title is given by Boas who says :—

"The title is admirably suggestive of the character of the piece, which introduces us to a society whose atmosphere is one of perpetual holiday, where everybody, from high to low, having time enough on hand and to spare, indulges in leisurely circuitous fashions of speed and action, productive of mistakes and apprehensions —in short, of much ado which, in the long run, always proves to be about nothing."

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Another critic, Dr. Brandes, says that the title does nothing except that of indirecting a point of view : "The implication is that since Hero was innocent and the accusation more slender, since she was not really dead and the sorrow for the loss was, therefore, groundless ; and since she and Claudio are at last married, as they might have been at first, therefore the whole thing has been much ado about nothing, and resolves itself into an inner harmony which leaves no discord behind."

Indeed all the characters in the play have or make much ado *i.e.*, too much fuss about nothing. This can be shown in the main plot, the main sub-plot (Beatrice-Benedick story) and the comic sub-plot (of Dogberry and Verges) as has been done by Hudson in his "Shakespeare's Life, Art and Character" thus :

"The play indeed is rightly named ; we have several nothings each in its turn occasioning a deal of stir and perturbation ; yet there is so much of real flavour and spirit stirred out into effect that the likeliness of the occasions is scarcely felt or observed, the thoughts being far more drawn to the persons who make the much ado than to the nothing about which the *much ado* is made.....The general view of life which it presents answers well to the title. The persons indeed make or have *much ado* ; but all the while to us who are in the secret and ultimately to them also all this *much ado* is plainly about nothing.

"In the opening scene of the play, before Benedick appears, we see clearly that Beatrice has an interest in him to which she gives expression by making 'much ado' about his non-existent faults. She plies the messenger with satirical questions about Benedick, which draw forth testimonies to his valour and virtues. We surmise that the 'merry war' which has long gone on between Benedick and Beatrice, is on the lady's side at least, a mask for emotion which she is concealing. Benedick poses as 'an obstinate heretic in the despite of beauty', and this piques Beatrice into the resolution to outdo him with his own weapons, recognises the magnetic influence of his powerful personality even at the beginning of the play. Benedick also is by no means insensible to her charms.

"Outwardly, however, Benedick declares that the savage bull may in time bear the yoke, but never the sensible Benedick." With similar emphasis, Beatrice protests to her uncle that she will have none of men for her husband, for Adam's sons are her brethren, and she holds it a sin to match in her kindred. By excusing themselves from marriage both are accusing themselves. The vehemence with which the pair constantly repudiating the idea of matrimony give more than an inkling that this much ado about their contempt for love and marriage will prove to be about nothing.

"We know that Benedick and Beatrice are already in love, though Benedick reviles her behind her back and Beatrice speaks poniards face to face. So Don Pedro's elaborate plot, one of Hercules' labours to bring signior Benedick and Lady Beatrice into

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a mountain of affection the one with other',—is another instance of *Much Ado About Nothing*. All that said of Don Pedro's stratagism it is necessary to provide an avowal of that affection which is already there in their hearts. Balthazar also contributes his quota of 'much ado about nothing' by singing his ditty, "Sigh no more ladies". Benedick and Beatrice are easily trapped, he being horribly in love" and she declaring her feelings in verse. The jesters par excellence have to submit to a brief period of ridicule and laughter. The charge against Hero is monstrous and the source it springs from is tainted. And yet Claudio and his patron Don Pedro are convinced of so heinous an offence on such slender evidence. "This is in strict accord with the genius of the play where throughout, the most momentous inferences are built upon overhead scraps of dialogue, and 'much ado' thus results about nothing."

The long window charge in which Dogberry instructs his watch in their duties is a first instance of 'much ado about nothing'. His charge means that his subordinates must have everything undone that they are appointed to do. Fortunately, however, neighbours Seacole and Catcake arrest Borachio and Conrade though they misconstrue a whispered phrase and believe that they were on the track of "one Deformed"—a fictitious personage about whom they make much ado.

In the church we find two crowning instances of much ado about nothing—one, when Claudio with foul calumny casts back the innocent Hero into her father's arms, and another, when Leonato goes into a hysterical lementation over his daughter's supposed sham.

It is another case of much ado about nothing, when the greybeards, Leonato and Antonio, fail to persuade Claudio to cross swords with them, and the news of Hero's death does not produce the effect intended by the friar.

In the trial scene also, we find an instance of much ado about nothing, when Dogberry bewails that Conrade's words have not been put on paper, and that he has not been written down an ass.

Claudio's elegy upon Hero's cenotaph is only a cause of much ado about nothing, when on the morrow, his new-made bride unmasks, she is seen to be no other than Hero. And the critics who express some apprehensions that the unfortunate man also wins Beatrice will not escape a predestinate scratched face' are also furnishing an additional instance of 'much ado about nothing'.

4. THE THEME OF THE PLAY

Shakespearean critics have too often entertained themselves with speculations as to the specific moral thesis or purpose or some central theme of this or that play of his and have spun theories, but it should be remembered that Shakespeare was never a doctrinaire and his objects in writing these plays was not a moral dissertation or some specific moral problem, although it is true to say that a work of

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art to be really deserving of the name must needs be moral. Nevertheless it is worth our while to examine some of these theories.

(a) According to one critic. Brown, the structure of the play depends entirely on one *central theme*—a theme which had already influenced parts of earlier, comedies, *viz.*, that of appearance and reality,—of outward and inward beauty, words and thoughts,—in short, the theme of *loves's truth*. When this theme is recognized, the relationships and contrasts between the two main stories, which Shakespeare has been at pains to establish are at once apparent and the structural unity of the play is vindicated.....Shakespeare's ideas about love's truth, *viz.*, the immaginative acting of lover and the need for our imaginative response to it, the composition, individuality and complexity of a lover's truthful realization of beauty, and the distinctions between inward and outward beauty, appearance and reality and fancy and true affection—are all represented in *Much Ado About Nothing*, they inform its structure, its contrasts, relationships and final resolution ; they control many of the details of its action, characterization, humour and dialogue. Indeed, in fashioning these elements into a lively, dramatic whole, Shakespeare achieved his most conceited and considered judgment upon truth.

His device for presenting a lover's imagination, the play-within-the-play, is used repeatedly in *Much Ado About Nothing*, almost every development of the action involves the acting of a part and an audience's reaction to it. The relationship of Benedick and Beatrice (—the outstanding characters by whose names the play was sometimes known) is radically altered by two such play-scenes.....The pattern of the play as a whole becomes clearer when these two lovers are compared with Claudio and Hero. Whereas Benedick thinks he sees and understands everything Claudio is afraid to trust his judgment and must, to his own embarrassment, ask others for confirmation. Conditions are against certainty, he had noticed Hero on his way to the wars but it is only when he sees her for a brief moment on his return that he feels 'soft and delicate desires', all prompting him 'how fair young Hero is' (I. i. 235). His 'liking' is sudden and seems to be 'engendered' solely 'in the eyes', to be 'fancy' and not to the affection of '*true love*'. Because of the attraction of Hero's '*outward beauty*' he can say 'That I love her, I feel', but since he can only guess at her '*inward beauty*' he is unable to add 'That she is worthy I know' (I. i. 172).....Pedro's wooing of Hero in Claudio's name is another of the play-within-this-play.....By means of this play-scene Shakespeare has ensured that when Pedro drops his disguise and the matter is cleared up, we know that Claudio realizes the deceitfulness of appearances and yet dares to marry Hero on the evidence of his eyes above.....

Thus the two stories of *Much Ado About Nothing* turn on the same point ; the very wise and the very uncertain must both learn to trust inward of qualities, mere nothings to some other eyes : through a lover's imagination each must recognize inward truth and beauty, and must speak and act from a convinced heart.

Pradman Kishen Dhar

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"The introduction of the constable Dogberry and the men of the Watch also contributes to presenting and widening the underlying theme of the whole play. Dogberry is a great respecter of words—of long words, defaming words, and the phraseology of official regulations,—but he respects them only with respect to himself ; he interprets the regulations for his own peace of mind and uses words for the little that they mean to himself not for what they mean to others.....Thus when hidden truth is at last made so plain in all the three stories of the play, the action of the play must seem as good as over, but Dogberry goes with the news to Leonato, and between the one's busy concern to prepare for his daughter's wedding and other's happy concern to speak in polite and noble words, the message is never truly delivered.....When at last the bubble or mere 'appearance' is pricked which is the main theme, the comedy ends."

(b) According to another school of critics (Dr. Charlton, Sen Gupta and others) Shakespeare was perhaps presenting before us a complete picture of the way in which sheer wit may serve the cause of human sanity in human society in our pursuit of happiness—the goal of human life. Through Beatrice, the embodiment of wit Shakespeare has shown that wit in its ultimate resort must surrender to instinct (emotion) which, at long last, makes her the instrument of happiness in the critical moment of the plot. "Shakespeare was giving such intellectual agility as was Falstaff's, its opportunity to display how much of real human good it was capable of affecting... .....Beatrice becomes the chief figure of the piece and the primary instigator of the sentiments which leads to the happy solution of the story.....". She is a lively symbol of this message in the domain of comedy for in most of Shakespeare it is the heroine who is the torch-bearer of the dramatist's gospel of happiness. To Beatrice wit (intellect) is as natural as breathing, and yet in the long course of her ultimate quest for happiness, wit has to make a complete surrender to emotion (love).

Both Beatrice and Benedick—two of the most remarkable figures in Shakespeare's gallery of portraits—are endowed with more than ordinarily powerful intellects of the kind that always defines the dominance of emotions. But emotions are so strongly grounded in human nature that intellect has ultimately to yield place to them, for emotions have their origin in the innermost recesses of the soul which are only imperfectly illuminated by reason. "It is no wonder, therefore, that occasions arise when we are made aware of the deeper calls of the *Life Force* which puts the meddling intellect to shame." This is the picture of the interaction between intellect and emotion embedded in the inner soul of mankind that Shakespeare presents in *Much Ado About Nothing*. It is indeed one of the most sparkling and one of the most significant achievement in comedy "in that it presents a psychological study of the relative importance of intellect and emotion in our mental life, mainly in the character of Beatrice."

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"The picture of Beatrice's encounters with Benedick is really

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amusing, in that every exchange of repartee is only a disguised form of courtship. The repressed instinct of love which is made up of hope and fear, distorts her description and represents her success as defeat. It is in this way that intellectuals like her pay the penalty for an excess of an intellect. When therefore plot is laid which disarms their pride and makes an appeal as much to their pity as to their love, they fall easy victims and the defeat of their intellect is the triumph of what we may call the *Life Force*. The self-knowledge they acquire with the help of others leads them to a deeper understanding of and a more intimate dependence on each other. Beatrice learns to look up to Benedick as the cavalier who will defend her cousin by killing the vile accuser, and Benedick, who was hitherto a high-spirited misogynist, now becomes the champion of oppressed womanhood and not only finds a new mission to fulfil but also discovers a new humanity in himself."—(Sen Gupta).

(c) F. C. Kolbe analyses the play and arrives at the conclusion that the main idea of the play is 'False Seeming'. In his opinion, the very title of the play seems to enforce this idea, because things and persons, throughout the play, are made to appear other than what they are. Besides, the use of disguises, masks, trickery, hidding, pretending and counterfeiting is a feature leading to 'False Seeming'.

(d) The view of mankind which Shakespeare seems to illustrate in this play may be summed up thus : 'Man in spite of all his boast of freedom and independence is but the important creature of his temperament—this is the force that controls personality, and its development, in accord with this view, while on the one hand there must be no more talk of freedom, of will and self-mastery, or on the other, there needs only a certain temperament to force us to succumb to evil, there is nobody on earth (however stable and invulnerable his personality and temperament may be) who may not be ultimately thrown off his balance by the storm and stress of emotion, which is the most important ruling force of our conduct. In the play, both Beatrice and Benedick are totally routed by the storm and stress of emotion. Both fall into the trap set for them and devour greedily 'the treacherous bait'. Shakespeare seems to tell us plainly enough : 'It lies in every human being's temperament, that no self-praise, no steadfastness can save him from vulnerability in the same one spot. If his temperament be normal and not degenerate, man must always be susceptible to the joy of being beloved." Thus it is that Beatrice and Benedick make shipwreck upon this characteristic of human personality.

To Sum Up. In spite of these attempts of critics to import into his play some meaning or theme or message or criticism of life, or some philosophy or psychological problem, it should be remembered that Shakespeare was above all things an artist and as such did not concern himself weaving some fine spun theories of life, like the philosophical poets, Wordsworth, Shelley and Browning. So nothing can be more foolish on the part of his critics or admirers than to entertain themselves with these speculations and state dogmatically

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that this or that was the poet's specific theme or moral purpose in this play or that—the utterances of his characters were purely dramatic and they must not be identified as his own and have nothing to do with any deliberate philosophy of life.

But in all his dramas it is almost invariably his practice and his art to add some problem to make the story almost interesting. In this drama, Shakespeare puts his soul into the story of Benedick and Beatrice. In fact the play is that of Benedick and Beatrice. This is seen in the way in which he sacrifices everything within the limits of dramatic coherence, plausibility and probability to it. He uses Don John's conspiracy to make all easy for the confession of love between the pair under the stress of the near tragedy of the church-scene. So, Shakespeare's *main motive* or *theme* of the play seems to be, in the words of Charlton, "We give a complete picture of the way in which sheer wit is human sanity in human society, and thereby extend the scope of its possible happiness." In drawing this picture Shakespeare shows the complete surrender of wit to instinct (emotion of love) or the defeat of intellect and the triumph of the Life Force (emotion or instinct) or interaction between intellect and emotion in humanity's search for happiness.

5. DATE (EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL EVIDENCE) AND SOURCES OF THE PLAY

We must remember that none of the plays of Shakespeare have come down to us in original manuscript. Even if he dated them, these dates are now lost. But a knowledge of the most probable date of composition is important because the chronological order of their production is a most fruitful method of studying Shakespeare.

There is, however, evidence to show that some of his plays were regularly in print after his death. They were in quarto form and included, among others, *Romeo and Juliet*, *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, *Merchant of Venice*, *Hamlet*, and *King Lear*. The Quartos were editions of single plays in the size of quarter sheet. Seventeen plays of Shakespeare thus appeared in 'Quarto' before any complete edition of his plays was published for the first time in 'Folios'. The remaining plays were printed in 1623 for the first time, when a collection of his plays was produced in one volume, known as the First Folio. Thus, twenty of his plays appeared for the time in the 'Folio' edition under the editorship of two fellow-actors of Shakespeare *viz.*, John Heminge and Henry Condell, "to keep the memory of so worthy a friend and fellow-actor."

Shakespeare apparently did not write his plays for printing. He prepared them as scripts for actors for being acted in theatre for payment, and not as texts for readers, as the idea of publishing them for future generations of readers did not suggest itself to him. So, the texts of Shakespeare have not come down to us in the form in which he wrote them. Various editors have altered the texts at various stages. But there was some sort of printing to which his plays were

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put. And there were evolved certain principles also for editing the texts of Shakespeare. On a close examination of Shakespeare's plays, we find that they have been revised and altered. It is generally assumed that some portions of *Macbeth*, as it has come down to us, were not written by Shakespeare, and the evidence of foreign interference is also clear in *King John*. While judging the value of an old texts containing corrections and alterations, three kinds of evidences come to light to enable us to decide how far these alterations and corrections are original, made by the author himself. These evidences emanate from handwriting, spelling and poetry. Not much can be said on the basis of handwriting, for it is difficult to recognize his handwriting. The evidence deduced from spellings is of a considerable value. The third evidence is also of a stronger value. It is literary or that of poetry.

Much Ado About Nothing is first mentioned in the stationer's Register under the date, August 4, 1660. A few weeks later, it was published in a six-penny quarto by Andrew Wise and William Apley. The quarto presents a very good text and Prof. Polland holds that "the text was first set up in print in 1600 in a good Quarto, direct from the Manuscript, Theatrical Prompt Book. "The sole basis of the modern text of this play is the Quarto of 1600.

The text of *Much Ado About Nothing*, in its present form, is an earlier play of Shakespeare's handwriting, which he subsequently revised and recast somewhere towards the end of 1958 or the beginning of 1599. The New Cambridge Editors say that there had been many loose threads in the main story of Hero-Claudio episode, and these threads were loosened by the introduction of a new interest in the Beatrice and Benedick story and that this story was introduced as a second thought during revision. In the old play the principal interest was in the Hero-Claudio story. In the new play—a revised one—this interest has shifted to the story of Benedick and Beatrice. Prof. Dover Wilson says that Shakespeare was most interested in Benedick and Beatrice, which necessitated rewriting of the old play and expansion of the parts of these two characters. In the old play the principal plot presumably concerned the fortunes of Hero and Claudius This theory is also supported by irregular stage directions, inadequate or careless speech headings, imperfectly deleted passages and scanty punctuations. The Arden editors do not however agree with Prof. Wilson's theory of the old play and its subsequent revision.

The date of composition of *Much Ado About Nothing* must be, at the latest, 1600, when the play was entered into the Stationer's Register. We may infer that the play could not have been written earlier than 1598, as it was not mentioned in Mere's *Palladis Tamia*, published in the autumn of 1598. Mere's list is a complete list of all the plays written by Shakespeare up to 1598. Because this play, so popular and brilliant as it is, was not mentioned in Mere's list, it was not written earlier than 1599. So much is in regard to the external evidence to this play of wit.

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In regard to the internal evidence, the following points may be usefully noted. The opening scene of the play is supposed to contain an allusion to the campaign of the Earl of Essex in Ireland in 1599. The same battle also speaks of the pre-occupation of the Watch about 'Deformed' during III, iii, is connected with a character in Ben Jonson's *Cynthia's Revels* or the *Fountaine of Selfe-love*, a comical satire, which was first acted in 1600 by the children of Queen Elizabeth's Chapel. In this there is one, "Amorphus or the Deformed, a traveller that drunk the fountain and there tells the wonders of the water." The fact that Ben Jonson's Amorphus has not been, like the watch's man, "a vile thief this seven years," is, of course, no argument against the identification. The Watch is not supposed to be intelligent. Unfortunately, it is hard to see how a play sold to the printer in August, 1600, after sundry performances, can make an allusion to another play first acted in 1600. It is barely possible, however, if Ben Jonson's piece was acted early in the year, for there are certain indications of haste in *much ado* that incline one to place its composition not very long before publication. But there is every improbability that there is any allusion. Really apart from the title page there is no direct evidence for that. All that can be said is that the general air of fresh maturity warrants a supposition that the play, as it exists today, was put together about 1599-1600. The first scene of flying between Beatrice and Benedick is the work of no prentice hand. Rosaline and Biron talk like brilliant youngsters sparring in an exhibition match ; Beatrice and Benedick wield dangerous weapons in the serious and external duel of sex.

Elizabethan dramas are not original. So is not Shakespeare. His material is found in the work of other men. Its reason is that the Elizabethan Londoner did not want a new and serious play. If it were so, it would run only for a few weeks. He wanted a much less new and much less serious play. If it were so, it would run for a few years. This is because he did not, unlike today, have many playhouses. He had only three or four. Further, the Elizabethan theatres "were a roaring loom of drama at which new plays were woven with great speed and by which old plays were patched, freshened and joined up for immediate use, several hands, sometimes, contributing to the processes. Successful dramatic authorship in Elizabethan times consisted not in the ability to produce one 'new and original drama' of modern life, but in the ability to adapt or put together a stirring play in a few weeks." There were many a piece as material for the Elizabethan playwrights. Hollinshed's *Chronicles*, full of historical incidents, Plutarch's *Lives* full of examplary biographies, books of stories, mostly Italian stories and a pile of old plays,—were materials for Shakespeare to work on He set to work and produced *Macbeth* from Hollinshed, *Julius Caesar* from Plutarch, *As You Like It* from Lodge's *Rosalynde*, and *King John* from *The Troublesome Raine of King John*. There is nothing unusual in this. Even today, popular pieces are brought to the screen with "new songs and new costumes". The American film-

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makers have only one story to tell, however much they vary the names and places. The Elizabethan play-goer enjoyed the inevitable complication of lover, first heroine (disguised as a boy), second heroine, who falls in love with the 'boy', and second hero who comes in the end to save the situation, just as heartily as the picture-goer enjoys the strong silent man in weeds of the West, the villain of mongrel race, and the child-like daughter of the ranch secretly strenuously ordered by the speechless hero."

Even the Greeks expected in their tragedies the presentation of

"Thebes or Pelops line
On the tale of Troy divine,"

who are so well known to even a child in Greece. The mediaeval men and women had an appetite for the stories of love, romance and chivalry. King Arthur and his knights, or Charlemagne and his Peers have been great attractions even to the poets till the nineteenth century. Coleridge took *The Ancient Mariner* from a book of travels: Keats took *Endymion* from Lempriere: and *Isabella* from Boccaccio. They took material from the past yet they have been great. Their greatness lies in not they begin with but in what they end with. Shakespeare's greatness appears in his wonderful power of making his characters alive. Hamlet, King Lear, Othello, Rosalind, Portia, Ophelia are living characters and Shakespeare's power in making them immortal lies in not retelling their story well but in making their lives enduring.

The use of known stories for play or poem or picture has another justification: "In all art, whether literary, pictorial, musical or architectural, a certain character will be common to a certain age or country. Every age has its stock subjects for artistic treatment. The reason for this is that it is convenient for the reader, spectator, or listener, to be familiar with the main outlines of the story. Written literature is freer in this respect than painting or sculpture, for it can explain and prepare the reader better for what is coming."

Possible Sources of the Play—"It is a high adventure to trace the source of a work of genius. The one man who could do it well is probably the last man who would attempt it. His business being creation, he is much more intent on using his material than on asking where it came from. Nor is he ever likely to change. The changes are that when he had finished one work, and all the world is talking of him, he is already deaf to the past and gloriously planning another," says Prof. Gordon. In view of what Prof. Gordon has said, it will, indeed, be an unwise attempt to discover the sources of what have been the great plays. Surely, a remark,— "If the plays are good plays, why trouble to unearth the inferior stuff of which they were made,"—is an apt one. "When the author chooses to be silent, we readers must be content to stammer." For most certainly, the "most works of creative genius are casual and secret in their beginnings, the result of happy accidents, of little springs and flourishings in the mind. These are the true sources and these are precisely what no man by taking pains can find out."

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Shakespeare's plots are, in most of the cases, borrowed. "The passion to have everything all one's all" never, it seems, troubled Shakespeare. He took no trouble in inventing his stories. Whatever came his way, he made a drama of it. Prof. Gordon's remarks, in this connection, are worthy of note. He observes, "Shakespeare had a kind of thrift of natural economy, such as good housewives have and good artists. He liked to take the old thing and surprise it into life".

Shakespeare's plots for his tragedies have been drawn from three sources—Roman and British history, British and Scandinavian legends and Italian novelle. For his comedies, stories from Italy are the main source. These stories do not concern the fortunes of kings or queens but deal with things which concern the family and its private life. Their appeal is realistic and modern. All of them contain a well-knit, coherent and rounded plot. They are all made into close-knit and compact stories. Shakespeare found in them good material and he used it admirably.

There are three strands woven into the plot of *Much Ado About Nothing*. The main story is summarised in the following words: "A love deceived into thinking his betrothed unfaithful, by seeing a man at her chamber-window." Claudio has been deceived into a belief that his betrothed Hero is unfaithful. Claudio rejects her before the whole congregation, in the church, at the marriage altar. Hero, overcome with humiliation, swoons. It is made known that she is dead. Dogberry and his Watchmen, who had known the dastardly plot, help Hero and vindicate her innocence. With this main plot is intimately connected the story of love-making between Beatrice, Cousin of Hero, and Benedick, friend of Claudio These are the two characters—masters of wit, yet opposed ceremonies in wit combat. They are made to believe, through a trickery of friends that they love each other. Afterwards they marry each other. Third strand in the story is that of Dogberry and Verges. They are minor characters providing what we call, comic relief. Yet their contribution to the plot is very great. They expose the dastardly plot of Don John and save Hero from disgrace and ruin.

There is an entry in regard to 'Panecia, in the documents relating to the office of the Revels in the time of Queen Elizabeth under date 18th December, 1574. Dr. Furness suggests that 'Panecia' stands for 'Fenicia'. And 'Fenicia' is understood to be the counterpart of Hero. Whether there had been a story with Fenicia as its main character or not is only a conjecture, for there is no proof handed down to us.

(1) *Source from Ariosto.* There is a Tale of Genevra (Hero) and Ariodant (Claudio) in Books IV, V, and VI of the *Orlando Furioso* by Ariosto (1474-1533). This tale was translated by Sir John Herington is 1591. The 'Stationer's Register' records an even earlier version by peter Beverley (1566) but this either failed to survive or did not come into print at all. While there is not much

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of similarity between the plot of Orlando and that of *Much Ado*, there is one point in common. And it is that Dalinda (Margaret) is made by Polinesso (Don John) to impersonate Genevra at a window and give him enterance to her room. It would be unfair to Shakespeare if we were to, just for this small similarity, hold that Shakespeare was directly indebted to Ariosto.

(2) *Spenser*. Another popular version of the Hero story is related by Spenser in Book II, Canto iii, of the *Faerie Queene*. But here again the differences are even greater. Thought Hero (Claribell) is impersonated by Margaret (Pryene), there is no window for entering. There is a "darksome house" into which Claudio (Phaon) is led by Don John (Philemon) where he sees the supposed interview. The wrathful Phaon kills Claribell without a word, and then discovering his crime, kills Philemon too, and is about to kill Pryene, when he is attacked himself by persons, who have no counter parts in *Much Ado*. The resemblance, here too. is the smallest possible.

(3) *Bandello*. Italy has been the land of tales since Boccaccio's *Dacamerone* was written in 1353. Two centuries after Boccaccio, there came on the scene Matteo Bandello, who published the first three volumes of his Boccaccian stories, which were gave and gay. These stories earned popularity rather early. They were translated also. These translations did not contain the Hero-Claudio story. As the story is not found to be extant in some earlier play we may suppose that Shakespeare must have read or heard the original story written in choice Italian by Bandello himself. There is nothing improbable in that. The Elizabethans were exceedingly Italianate, and Italian was as current among persons of any education as French is today. Moreover, Bandello is not hard to read.

Steevens suggests that Shakespeare might have got his story from elsewhere. He mentions the name of Francois de Belleforest a teller of tales and courtier of Queen Marguerite of Navarre, who compiled, in 1582, a collection of *Histories Tragiques*, in which Bandello's hero Claudio actually does appear. It is tempting to dwell upon Belleforest, for, he enriched and expanded the story and where there are differences of detail, Shakespeare follows Bandello rather than Belleforest. From the points of the legend, it appears that the Hero-Claudio story for *Much Ado About Nothing* has been directly or through the medium of some banished play, taken from Bandello. The outlines of Bandello's story are plainly, those of *Much Ado About Nothing*. In the year 1283, King Piero of Arragon seized the throne of Sicily and defeating Charles of Anjou established his court at Messina. It is at this point that Bandello's story begins. Don Timbreo di Cardona, a knight of King Piero, falls passionately in love with Fenieia, the young and beautiful daughter of Lionato de Lionati, once a nobleman of the town but later in life fallen on evil days. Failing to make her his mistress, Timbreo approaches Fenicia by proxy and was later betrothed to her. Lionato

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is happy at this alliance and so is everybody else. Don Girondo Olerio Valenziano, who also loves Fenicia, bribes a foolish youth, name not given, (in the context of Shakespeare-Borachio), to tell (Timbreo) that Fenicia is unchaste and that he may prove it for himself, if he watches her window from a ruined place in the garden. When night comes, Don Timbreo duly sees someone bring a ladder to Fenicia's window and entering into it in the gay dress of a gallant. Timbreo instantly believes the guilt of Fenicia and informs Lionato of her guilt saying that the latter should find another husband for Fenicia. Lionato believes in the innocence for his daughter and declares that Timbreo seeks to evade this marriage because the former was poor. Fenicia swoons and apparently dies. The report of her death is generally accepted. Leonato allows her funeral to proceed. The coffin in housed amid general lamentation. Later, Girondo, overcome with remorse, confesses his crime before the tomb of Fenicia and begs Trimbreo to kill him in first punishment. Timbreo behaves magnanimously with the repentant sinner. Both of them go to Lionato and promise to make amends in the matter the latter wants. Leonato asks Timbreo to take in marriage a wife selected by him and the promise being given, he produces Fenicia, living and loving. And everything ends happily.

Even this outline makes, it clear that there are certain differences between Shakespeare and his original. In the story, Lionato is not the governor of a city. He is only an impoverished nobleman. Therefore the rejection of the bride by the lover seems less monstrous and less improbable in the story than in the play of Shakespeare. Secondly, Don Girondo, in the story, is a forlorn lover who only seeks to prevent the success of his rival. In the play of Shakespeare, Don John is a villain, who has the malice of a bastard. "Shakespeare refuses to make a villain of his hero's brother-in-arms or to make rivalry in love a motive for villainy." In Don John Shakespeare vaguely anticipates Iago. Thirdly, Shakespeare imposes, on his hero, a more odious rule than that of Timbreo in the story. "Timbreo conducts the repudiation like a gentleman, Claudio like a play actor." In the story, Timbreo makes the change privately and through a third person, while in the drama the situation is rather tense—the daughter of a governor has been publicly charged by a stranger. Shakespeare makes Claudio guilty of a vile and incredible charge. Fourthly, in the story, there is no girl disguised to resemble Fenicia. In the play, Margaret, the maid of Hero, is shown rather improbably as "an instrument in a deadly plot" against her mistress. Indeed the whole Hero Claudio story, from the wooing by proxy to the incredible scene of repudiation, is the poorest part of the play. It compares very unfavourably with its Italian parallel in probability, in plot and in detail. Don Pedro behaves with entire unintelligence. Claudio, as we have said, is merely despicable ; Leonato is a repellant and foolish father ; Margaret, who holds the key of the mystery says nothing about it in spite of all her character, and Hero herself is almost meanly acquiescent, lacking the air of

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spiritual exaltation that redeems the sacrifice of Helena to Bertram. In Bandello, the charge is unanswerable ; in *Much Ado*, it would not survive a moment's investigation.....Shakespeare handles the story very carelessly and seems to be interested in it merely as material for the dramatic and rhetorical church-scene." Commenting on the play, as such, George Sampson writes, "The workmanship of the pattern is much below Bandello's but the workmanship of the fabric is, of course, beyond any such comparison. Though nowhere rising to the exquisite poetic beauty of *Twelfth Night*, *Much Ado* is rich in the texture that gives to Shakespeare's verse and prose its unmatchable quality."

As discussed above, Bandello appears to be the source which Shakespeare has fallen upon for the Hero Claudio story. But for the trickery played upon by Margaret, Shakespeare seems indebted to either Ariosto or Spenser. In Ariosto, "the sole point in common is that Dalinda (Margaret) is made by polinesso (Don John) to impersonate Genevra at a window and give him entrance to her room." In Spenser, the difference is even greater. For, he makes no mention of a window. He makes one of a "darksome browne" into which Phaon (Claudio) is led by (Philemon) Don John, where he sees the supposed interview.

6. SHAKESPEARE'S ORIGINAL CONTRIBUTION TO THE PLAY

Bandello's story is more plausible and is better told than Shakespeare's but Shakespeare's play is richer in human interest than Bandello's but Shakespeare has improved upon the story by adding new characters and by giving us exciting dramatic situations. "Bandello gives us no Dogbarry and Verges, no thrilling dramatic point like the sudden 'Kill Claudio' that makes an elaborate piece of melodrama come alive, and above all, no Benedick and Beatrice." Beatrice and Benedick are two new characters added. They are the people on the stage, they are the people in real life. Beatrice especially is in the right line of Shakespeare's sparkling heroines. "She is Rosaline and Rosalind and Portia, and something of Kate the shrew." She is a mystery. She has no parents, no mother and no father, "She is Shakespeare's most complete orphan without father or mother or any indicated parentage." She is Shakespeare's one of the most enduring heroines.

Whether Shakespeare had any suggestions from any quarters for the creation of Beatrice and Benedick is a difficult question to answer. George Sampson has at length tried to trace the sources from which Shakespeare might have drawn these two characters, but at the end of the discussion, he only mentions that 'the inferences are sometimes rash and should be accepted with caution." We should, therefore, accept that these two characters are Shakespeare's own invention.

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There are yet two more characters, Dogberry and Verges, who are Shakespeare's own invention and without whom the interest in the play would have been halved. Actually, these two, as constables, contribute "little to the story and something to the plot." "The happy blundering helps first to tangle and then to unravel the mystery, but they are entirely remote from the tragedy of Hero and comedy of Beatrice. Their special function is not to provide what is called 'comic relief' and also not to heighten a sense of impending doom, as is done by the grave-makers in *Hamlet* or gardners in *Richard II*. They are there to stop the play from straying outside the limits of comedy. In fact, "Dogberry and Verges are on the plane of Bottom and Quince and are conceived with largeness of heart and sympathy that ought to shame the Snobbery." Shakespeare like Dickens laughs *with* his comic characters, not *at* them, say, if they be Dogberry and Verges or Falstaff Malvalio. "Humour is, in a way, the greatest triumph of creative literature, for it must come pure from a generous heart. No one by taking thought can create humorous characters." This is the reason why humorists are so few. "Bottom and Quince are examples of 'mere clay, struggling with an unwonted artistic and intellectual task : Dogberry and Verges are 'mere clay' struggling with the intricacies of the law."

Shakespeare's originality lies in the invention of his characters. Coleridge also notes this point. He writes, "The interest in the plot is always in fact on account of the characters, not *vice versa*, as in almost all other writers : the plot is a mere canvas and no more. Hence arises the true justification of the same stratagem being used in regard to Benedick and Beatrice—the vanity in each being alike. Take away from *Much Ado About Nothing* all that which is not indispensable to the plot, either as having little to do with it, or at least, like Dogberry and his comrades, forced into the service, when any other less ingeniously absurd watchmen and night constables would have answered the mere necessities of the action—take away Benedick, Beatrice, Dogberry and Verges and the reaction of the former on the character of Hero—and what will remain ? In other writers the main agent of the plot is always the prominent character in Shakespeare it is so, or is not so, as the character is in itself calculated or not-calculated to form the plot, Don John is the mainspring of the plot of this play, but he is merely shown and then withdrawn."

7. ATMOSPHERE OF THE PLAY

There are three stands woven into the plot of the play. The main story is that of Hero and Claudio, which has not been treated Shakespeare's most characteristic manner. There is excellent poetry. There is forceful prose. "Prose predominates in comedy and where conversational rather than emotional and imaginative effect is desired." But the dramatic depiction of character is rather poor. This

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story has a peculiar way of wooing. It is an atmosphere of wooing and love-making, but they are in a very strange way. Hero is wooed by Claudio and then Don Pedro takes upon himself the task of wooing her for his friend. It is a peculiar situation indeed. What is more peculiar is that Hero does not feel any awkwardness in the change of her wooer. Then the account of Pedro's wooing is "so meagre that it is not possible to form an idea of how her deeper self reacted to this vicarious courtship." There is no indication of what Hero exactly feels towards the lover who lacks the initiative of his own wooing. In this thread of the story the element of love-making is less prominent. The atmosphere is surcharged less with love-making and more with surprise. There is surprise on the shifting of wooers, Don Padro in place of Claudio, And, there is greater surprise at the mute acceptance of Claudio's love by Hero, who is too passive to act. She does not rather cannot dominate the play as does Rosalind or Portia.

The other stand is that of Beatrice and Benedick. They are, of course, the glory of the play. They have used a language which even Shakespeare could not use elsewhere. Possibly Congreve or Sheridan could have done so. Their brilliant speech, extreme lucidity of analytic thought and phrasing have given a reality to the situation. The whole atmosphere is surcharged with realism coupled with marriment and sport. Beatrice, as she says, was born under a dancing star, only created to speak 'all mirth and no matter.' She is gaily personified. She makes a point of keeping her heart on 'the windy side of care' and removing every unpleasant impression for from her. There is little of melancholy element in her. She is never sad, not even when she is asleep, for when she gets up, she awakes laughing over dreams full of wild tricks. She is 'born in a merry hour', not a quarrelsome one, so that her interchanges of wit never become rasping. "Beatrice has 'dancing feet' : she runs 'like a lapwing' ; a stew danced at her birth : the part is featherweight." Benedick is of rougher stuff. His speeches have a broader sweep. He is gifted with an inexhaustible wealth of metaphor and imagery. "Hang me up in a bottle like a cat." Both produce fun. Secondly, both are sincere. They are not hypocrites. And, they are far from being foolish. They are intelligent, and as intelligent persons they try to analyse and measure life with their intelligence. So these two characters fill the play with fun, reality and sincerity. There is one more thing that runs through the vein of Beatrice and Benedick. And it is wit, a sparkling wit. Indeed, there is a battle of wit between these two characters. On account of this wit, we call it a play of wit and not of character or of manners.

There is yet another strand to the play. Dogberry and Verges and their Watchmen are the characters which complete this strand. They are the artistic creations of Shakespeare. They are the "most misused of Shakespeare's comics", as Webster remarks. Dogberry and Verges are not there to provide 'comic relief'. Nor are they there to heighten a sense of impending doom. They are only there to keep a serious story from straying outside the limits of comedy,

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It is towards the maintaining of a balance in the atmosphere of the play that they have been created. Further, they are on the plane of bottom and Quince, who provide fun and frolic to the play. We certainly enjoy Dogberry and Verges. We certainly laugh with them and not at them.

A discussion as to what extent this play is Italian would appear necessary in the scheme of these chapters. Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch holds that *Much Ado*'s fibre is Italian. It is Italianate in the canon, "The characters of the play are Italian in their love of books, their literary turn, their superabundant life, their curious mixture of good and evil passions, love and hate, honour and villainy." This view is supported by A. B. Walkby in his Playhouse Impressions, where he writes, "They are all great readers. Even the women have probably studied Plato with Roger Ascham. Beatrice at any rate had read the Hundred Merry Tales. Then men are chokeful of the classic love of the new time.....Benedick talks glibly of Leander and Troilus (V. ii) and writes verse—had verse as a school student should—a halting sonnet of his own pure brain' (V. iv) Claudio is a hard part of his penance, if you please, for killing a poor lady is to hang her an epitaph upon her tomb and sing it to her bones." After commenting on the superabundant life in the play. Walker further adds, "But life and letters do not sum up the Renaissance. They must be completed by a touch of the lurid—Benvento Cellini must cut Pompero's throat as well as carve in silver—and we get our third impression. This is an impression of "sombre melo-drama. Italian treachery, the instruction of Mephistopheles into the Kermesse, which the dramatist has provided for us in the intrigue of Don John and Borachio .....", Commenting further on the manner of Claudio's wooing, behind a mask and in the person of his prince, Walker finds a premonition of the theatre of Hugo and Musset. He further adds, "And, when Claudio consents to wed a veiled lady whom he has never seen, he is the director of Caesare de Bazan".

Stopford Brooke is rather more clear and emphatic on this point. He writes, "In sentiment, in morals, in evil and good passions' in its high honour and villainy, in its scenery, in its pageantry and love of war the play is Italian.....they have the Italian wit, for its own sake rejoicing in itself.....Tuscan wit rather than Sicilian... ...with here and there a fescennine touch. A seriousness emerging now and then in the midst of its brilliance, and characteristically Italian, divides it from its Franch wit; and when the events of the play turn towards tragedy, this seriousness gains the upper hand with both Beatrice and Benedick. Those deep source of grave feeling (which in the Italian nature underlie its easy gaity) rise to the surface in the dark and sorrowful hours of the play and rule and dignify the action of Beatrice and Benedick.

To Sum Up. 'Much Ado about Nothing' is perhaps 'the most Italianate play in the canon and the closest to the spirit of the Renaissance' in that it produces in us a total impression of superabundant life and nearly all its characters display a love of literature

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and fine arts, both of which were undoubtedly features of the Renaissance era of which Shakespeare was undoubtedly the finest flower. He borrowed the essentials of his plot and several characters from Italian sources have Ariosto, Bendello, Cinthio, Giovanni, Florentino and other Italian story-letters. The setting is also Italian but in name only for Shakespeare is never overscrupulous in the matter of local colour. His characters move as "unconcernedly as though Messina (where the scene is mostly laid) were in the heart of their own Warwickshire in England." If the main characters of the play are Italian in nature, the lesser folks, *viz.*, Dogberry, Verges and the Watch are distinctly English. Everything about these latter —Their jokes, their self-conceit, their tricks of speech, their oddities, their names, their glorious incapacity for action like that of the English small tradesmen—is English, Shakespeare has presented us with a composite picture by skilful amalgamation of the two elements in such a way that the total impression produced in us is that they belong to the same race and freely move about in the streets of Messina as if they were Italian themselves. What is sad in the play from Italy. What is gay from Shakespeare.

The low comedy centring round Dogberry and Verges and the Watch is undisguisedly English in an Italian setting. This English humour is distinct from the wit of Europe : It is what may be called 'compassionate laughter', *i.e.*, laughter of love and not of malice and hatred as in the French. The benignant humanity of the dramatist makes her humour genial, kindly and tolerant, instead of being critical or cynical. His tolerance of weaknesses in human characters is the outcome of his robust optimism in which speaks volumes of his healthy mind and outlook on men and things. It is this that makes the play peculiarly English comedy in an Italian setting.

8. CONSTRUCTION OR STRUCTURE OF THE PLOT OR PLAY AND ITS DEVELOPMENT

Structure. The plot is very simple and is easily told. Shakespeare's originality does not lie in the plot but in the interest which depends mainly on characterisation—on how the dramatist conceives the characters and makes them cohere with and sustain the action : on how he maintains a kind of equipoise between characters and incidents and, above all, how he interweaves the different strings or strands of his story into a harmonious whole in a variegated pattern : It is this that makes this play on the most closely-knit of the comedies except for a certain careless awkwardness about the Borachio plot, there is hardly any technical fluid or a loose end nor even an appendage like the Silvius-Phebe in *As You Like It*. For absolute power of composition, for faultless balance and blameless rectitude of design, there is unquestionably no creation of his hand that will bear comparison with *Much Ado About Nothing* 'which signalizes the dramatist's final conquest in the realm of comedy."

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Shakespeare is now securely easy in his mastery over his technique. He is now a skilled craftsman who can firmly grasp and control the whole of a complicated design.

That the welding of the two plots—the main plot (the story of Hero and Claudio) and the comic underplot (the Beatrice-Benedick story)--is a masterpiece of constructive skill, will be evident from the following :

"Shakespeare has made the interdependence of the two plots complete and thorough by a *variety of devices e.g.*, (i) The main characters of the two stories are bound together by ties of kinship, affection and friendship. (2) One of the main characters of the main plot, *viz.*, Don Pedro is made the author of a stratagem to bring about the match between Beatrice and Benedick, the heroine and hero of the sub-plot. (3) The two plots are finally welded together in the fire of tragedy in the church or repudiation scene ; —the climax of the main plot thus forces on the solution of the comic under-plot, *i.e.*, the happy union of Benedick with Beatrice. This welding of the comic into the serious plot is a masterpiece of constructive skill."

That much skill has been used in the strategy of the play as a whole will be clear from the remark of Mark Van Doren : "A difficult problem had been posed and was more than satisfactorily solved by the dramatist.....the problem before Shakespeare was dual : how to prevent the main action, and indeed the only action, from turning the play into a tragedy or near tragedy ; and how to bestow enough body upon comic theme to make it matter either in itself or in its function as preventive. The Hero and Claudio never came close enough to us for pity or terror to be felt, and that Beatrice and Benedick, created as an insulting medium between tragedy and us, become finally so important as to bear all away upon their comic backs. But it is the seriousness of the central situation (in the repudiation scene) that sheds upon Benedick and Beatrice so much importance. As the play stands, neither pair of lovers can do without the other. Both skill and instinct are manoevring every scene."

The two plots are thus so perfectly dovetailed into each other that the joint is barely visible. In most of the other plays, some element or other could be discarded without wrecking the structure of the play. But here none of the elements can be gently removed and set aside ; to remove any of them the joint must be forcibly broken.

Don John's plot affects directly the situation between Claudio and Hero, and through this indirectly the situation between Benedick and Beatrice ; and the discovery of it by Dogberry and Verges affects the one again directly and the other indirectly, and is responsible for the final happy ending. The more one studies this play simply as a bit of technical craftsmanship, leaving completely out of account its wit, its humour, its delineation of character, the more admirable it appears.

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Side by side with the brilliant 'high' comedy of Benedick and Beatrice (of the under-plot) Shakespeare places the equally brilliant 'low' comedy of Dogberry and Verges, which is "an inimitable specimen of quaint plundering and misprisions of meaning" constituting what may be called the *third strand* of the plot. This third strand is connected with the two other strand by its being made use of in connection with the unravelling of the conspiracy of Don John and Borachio, which threatens to convert the play into a tragedy. The role played by Dogberry and Verges is thus made essential to the main-plot for, without this third strand, the villainy of Don John, whose shadow overhangs the second half of the play, might have gone undiscovered. If it were not so, the low comedy of Dogberry and Verges, introduced merely for the groundlings would have been inartistic. The way in which the dramatist forces his clowns into the service of his plot, is the best proof of his constructive skill. Each of the three strands of the plot is thus connected with the other two and welded into a composite whole.

Thus *Much Ado About Nothing* is admittedly the best example of a typical Shakespearian play which welds together inextricably into an organic whole three apparently different threads without any loose end. It shows an advance in technique, designing dovetailing and constructive skill which are without any parallel anywhere else in literature.

Development. According to Moulton and Hudson, five distinct stages are to be noted in the development of the plot of a typical Shakespearian comedy, *viz.*, (1) The exposition or introduction or the tying of the knot ; (2) the complication or the tying of the knot ; (3) the catastrophe or turning-point or the climax (the knot tied) ; (4) the resolution or the untying of the knot ; and (5) the denouement or the knot united. On the basis of the above stages the play may be analysed in this way :—

(1) *The Exposition*—In all plays of Shakespeare the exposition of the plot is provided in the opening scene which starts the action and at the same time tells the audience *'what is all about'* (a feature of 'classical drama' introduced by a preliminary monologue or 'prologue' and by 'chorus' of the early Elizabethan playwrights, *i.e.* the subject-matter, the important characters which figure in it, and their relation to one another : This scene gives us information, for instance, about the relations (i) between Claudio and Hero and (ii) between Benedick and Beatrice—two parallel actions of the main plot and the no less important sub-plot though not dramatically so. A vague provision of incipient tragedy which has its climax in the repudiation scene, is also suggested in this scene by the sullen attitude of Don John who is evidently unhappy at the prospect of Claudio's happiness and has already started forging his weapons to mar his happiness by foul means.

(2) *The Complication* (*Tying of the Knot*)—The exposition reveals Claudio's passion for Hero and Don Pedro's undertaking to

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woo and won her for Claudio. A complication ensures at this stage while Don Pedro is faithfully carrying out his part in wooing and winning Hero for his friend Claudio with Leonato's consent. Don John is plotting the ruin of the match, with the help of Borachio. Thus side by side with the main plot the counter-plot of Don John and Borachio also advances and complicates the issue of the impending match. The play is given a tragic turn when Don John follows up his plan of the midnight personation by Margaret, thereby giving secular proof of the infidelity of Hero. At this critical stage the dramatist introduces the third strand, *viz.*, Dogberry Verges and the Watch who relieve the tragic tension to some extent and become instrumental at a later stage for resolving the complication of the plot but for which the subsequent repudiation some would have been inendurably pathetic. Although Borachio is arrested by the stupid Watchman after the confession of his crime to Conrade, and although Dogberry and Verges do report to Leonato about what was detected by the Watch, their foolish long mindedness and the fussy haste of Leonato himself, prevent the truth from being known by him with the result that the tragedy of the rejection of Hero is not averted in time.

Alongside of the main-plot is the comic sub-plot of Benedick and Beatrice. Then feud between them is already aggravated to the point of a violent breach and an open war. But at the same time Don Pedro goes about contributing for the falling in love of each other by both, blissfully ignorant of the move being made by Don John to ruin the match of Claudio with Hero. Obstinate heretics are thus translated into champions of love and matrimony.

(3) *The Climax or Turning-point or Catastrophe.* The Catastrophe is reached when Claudio publicly repudiates Hero in the church before the altar. The knot is tied in the climax but at the resolution or its untying also begins with the suggestion of the Friar and "the high strong emotion of the scene passes off in solemn quatrain at the close". The climax also includes the confession of love between Benedick and Beatrice under the stress of the tragedy. Thus "the plot to ruin one match achieves another." The way in which the serious and the comic under-plot are welded together shows the constructive skill of Shakespeare.

(4) *The Resolution or the Untying of the Knot*—The resolution commences, as we have seen, with the advice given by Friar Frances to Leonato to throw over his daughter "the veil of a reputed death" till the truth is finally revealed. The success of this suggestion is seen in (IV, ii) where the trial of Conrade and Borachio takes place before Dogberry and Verges. And now the remorseful Claudio mourns for what is revealed by Borachio and is willing to marry the niece of Leonato by way of compensation for the wrong done to him. The resolution of the comic plot is also affected in this part of the play when Benedick, who has already challenged Claudio to a duel, makes himself acceptable to Beatrice.

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(5) *The Denouement* (*The Knot Untied*)—Nothing now remains to prevent the happy ending brought about by paving off the young people of the two plots. Claudio finds Hero in the supposed niece of Leonato. Benedick also feels that this is the best moment for him to be united in wedlock with Beatrice.

The play is genuine comedy true to life—a comedy which for a while, like much happiness in real life, just skirts the tragic reefs—a faithful representation of life as men and women actually live it—in which the comic far outweigh the tragic elements.

9. ANALYSIS OF THE PLOT

Act I, Scene 1. The scene opens before Leonato's house. A messenger announces that Don Pedro of Arragon is arriving at Messina after having successfully quelled a rebellion fomented by his bastard brother, Don John. Leonato seems to have known it already that Don Pedro has bestowed high praise on a young Florentine called Claudio for the heroism displayed by him in quelling the rebellion. The messenger confirms this report and adds to it his own praise. Beatrice, Leonato's niece, enquires about Benedick, whom she designates Signior Mountanto, known for his challenge to a duel. She also makes a fun of his services in the war. It is thus a prelude to the wit combat between Beatrice and Benedick. Beatrice's aim is to make light of all Benedick's virtues and accomplishments. The messenger gets an impression that Benedick is not in the good books of Beatrice. Leonato and Beatrice are soon joined by Don Pedro, Don John, Claudio. Benedick and Balthazar. Don Pedro thanks Leonato and pays him a graceful compliment for his arranging a short stay at his house to entertain him and his companions at the cost of so much trouble on their way home. Leonato is happy at this opportunity, for behind all his labour and cost is love for them. Here a wit combat starts between Beatrice and Benedick. Benedick praises himself for being a favourite with ladies, but declares that he is indifferent to them. Beatrice professes the same indifference to the male sex but she feels happy to think that the women-folk is free from a 'pernicious suitor' like Benedick.

Claudio is smitten with love for Hero, Leonato's daughter. He solicits Benedick's opinion about her. Benedick does not approve the idea, for to him marriage means the risk of cuckoldom, Don Pedro re-enters and Benedick mentions to him about Claudio's intention of marriage with Hero. Don Pedro encourages the idea and promises all help. Benedick, however, discourages Claudio on this fancy and harks upon the risk of hours in such an affair. Don Pedro predicts Benedick's falling in love, but the latter only scoffs at it. He says that if such a thing were to happen, he would be prepared to stand any public disgrace and insult. Claudio goes ahead with his love for Hero and seeks Don Pedro's help. Don Pedro promises all possible help by winning her love for him.

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Scene 2. In this Scene Antonio, Leonato's brother is introduced. He conveys to his brother what is called 'a strange news.' The strange news is that Don Pedro and Claudio are overheard when they were talking in a garden and that Don Pedro proposed to divulge his love to Hero at the masked ball that very night, and if the lady responded he would inform her father immediately. Leonato asks his brother if the latter could tell him whether the man who overheard Pedro was a sensible man. This he wanted to know because he wanted to prepare his daughter before him so that she might be ready for an answer.

Scene 3. Don John the sullen brother of Don Pedro and Conrade, one of his followers, are found in conversation with each other. Conrade is trying to humour Don John for he is sad. He seems to nurse discontent about the world and is waiting for an opportunity to bite. They are joined by Borachio, another follower of Don John. This man is able to infuse some interest in Don John and is ripe for any mischief. He informs Don John of the proposed marriage between Claudio and Hero and also tells him that his brother Don Pedro is the man to sponser it. This disclosure provides Don John with an opportunity for mischief for he has a peculiar grudge against the young 'start-up' Claudio.

Act II, Scene 1. Don John is not present at the supper arranged by Leonato. His absence is commented upon by Leonato. Beatrice remarks that Benedick and Don John should neutralize each other's idiosyncrasies and make themselves ideal men. As for herself she would rather remain unmarried and feels confident that she would go to heaven as a maid. Then the masked dance begins. Don Pedro draws Hero aside and leads her out for a dance. The rest of them also pair themselves off with their partners.

Don John though absent physically is concealing himself behind the curtains to watch the action. He finds an opportunity to come out, when the dance is over, and talk to Claudio, who is alone. He, however, mistakes Claudio for Benedick. But he does his mischief by telling him that Don Pedro is in love with Hero and that he heard Don Pedro swear he would marry her that night. Claudio, who has a suspicious mind and is very credulous, readily falls into his trap. Finally Claudio and Hero are engaged and the day of their wedding is fixed up. There is also a counter-movement to have Beatrice and Benedick involved in love. This plan occurs to Don Pedro and he undertakes to have this put through. The witty conversation between Beatrice and Benedick is a lively part of this scene.

Scene 2. Don John plots against the marriage of Claudio. Borachio helps him. Borachio knows Margaret, the waiting-woman to Hero, and makes use of her for his plot. He suggests that Margaret could look out of the chamber-window of her lady and talk to Borachio and in the meantime Don John could bring Claudio and Don Pedro on the scene to witness this as proof of Hero's infidelity. Both of them would be kept at a distance so

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that they could not overhear the conversation between Margaret and Borachio. Don John, at that moment, would indicate to Claudio and Don Pedro that it was Hero who would be talking to Borachio. In this way, the faithlessness of Hero would be proved.

This scene as a "part of the machinery of the play and the machinery here weakens a little." The improbability of Margaret's part in this part of the plot lends colour to the view that the play was hastily written.

Scene 3. The scene opens with Benedick's soliloquy, in which he reviews Claudio in love—a change that takes place in him after the working of the scheme of Don Pedro. He used to mock the follies of others in love and now he himself has become the subject of his scorn by falling in love. He delighted in the music of the drum. Now he prefers the music of the tabor and the pipe. This change is coming in him.

The trick of Don Pedro has its desired effect on him. In him there are signs of softening towards Beatrice. When he knows that Beatrice is also in love with him, he decides to surrender unconditionally and thus gives up his single-blessedness.

Act III, Scene 1. Now Beatrice has got to be caught in the same trap as Benedick. Hero takes the leading part in it. Ursula helps Hero. Hero and Ursula walk in the pathway of the garden. Beatrice creeps into the bower. As per plan, Ursula starts praising Benedick highly and Hero adds that he is in love with Beatrice. Ursula asks Hero if she would reveal it to Beatrice. Hero replies in the negative and says that she sees no good out of it for Beatrice would rail against every man however rare features he might possess, telling Benedick's to Beatrice. Ursula agrees with Hero that Benedick is the most deserving gentleman. Beatrice then comes out of the bower and promises to respond to the love of Benedick.

Scene 2. Don Pedro and Claudio make fun of Benedick for having fallen in love. Benedick complains of toothache. They make a sport of him. Claudio detects signs of love in Benedick—Benedick has brushed his hat and has his face clean shaven. They also pity the woman, who loves him. Don Pedro suggests that she shall be buried with her face upwards in her lover's arms. Leonato takes Benedick away as if he would suggest some remedy for his toothache.

Don John enters and wants to have a word with Don Pedro in which Claudio could also share. He tells them that Claudio should give up the idea of marrying Hero, as she is faithless. He then wants them to accompany him that very night to the chamber-window of Hero where he would show them Hero talking to someone else and thus prove her faithlessness.

Leonato has been withdrawn from the scene. Had he been there, it would have been difficult for Don John to take Claudio and Don Pedro away. There is some subtle irony running through the whole scene.

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Scene 3. Dogberry and Verges arrange the night-watch, Dogberry selects men for the night-watch and he has his own standard of making a selection. Then Borachio and Conrade enter. Borachio is tipsy and in that state he tells how he executed the plot against Hero. Both of them were challenged by the Watchmen and arrested.

"It is the height of the comic art to introduce the frustration of the plot before its consummation in the church-scene, the edge is then taken off, a situation which otherwise would have been intolerably pathetic. This is 'comic irony' in the full sense, when the spectators are aware of some happy circumstances of which the actors are ignorant. The ministers of justice are conceived in the same comic spirit".—J. C. Smith.

Scene 4. Hero is getting ready for her wedding. She sends Ursula to bring Beatrice Margaret chooses the wedding-garment for her. It appears that Hero's heart is heavy with forebodings. Margaret cracks some jokes, which Hero does not like. Then Beatrice enters. She does not seem to be within herself. Margaret chaffs her. This scene speaks of some forebodings in Hero's heart, which means there is a hint of some impending misfortune, there is a premonition of her doom.

Beatrice is equally ill—love-sick. Margaret who 'chaffs' both Hero and Beatrice, is blissfully ignorant of the mischief she has unwittingly played upon Hero a few hours before.

Scene 5. Dogberry and Verges call on Leonato when he is preparing to take his daugher to the church to be married. Both attempt to explain matters to Leonato and after a long-winded statement they try to tell him that the Watchmen have arrested a couple of arrant knaves. They want to have the arrested men examined ; and Leonato, as he is in great hurry, permits them to hold the examination. A messenger comes to summon Leonato for the church ceremony. So Leonato goes with the messenger. In the meantime Dogberry and Verges prepare to hold the examination and summon Francis Sea-Cole who is to bring pen and inkhorn to the jail.

This is an admirable little scene. Dogberry and Verges fail to bring home the gravity of the impending evil. In fact, the title of the play would have been discounted by the disclosure and forestalling of the disaster. "Only such a pair and only the pair of them could have wasted a whole scene without conveying a hint of the information."

Act IV, Scene 1. The party has assembled in the church and Hero is going to be married. Leonato requests Friar Francis to be brief in the ceremony. When Claudio is asked for his consent, he answers in the negative. But Hero says that she knows of no impediment to the marriage. Claudio turns to Leonato and asks him whether he gives his daughter 'with free and unconstrained soul', and Leonato gives her to Claudio. Claudio then charges Hero with wantonness saying that her bluhes speak, not her innocence, but her guilt. He refuses to marry her. Leonato is in fix. He thinks that perhaps

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Claudio himself had spoilt her virginity before the marriage ceremony. At this Claudio declares that he treats her as his sister and Hero also confirms it. Claudio rages against Hero. Hero is simply astounded. In the meantime, Don John intervenes to say that the slander on Hero is true. Hero then cries out. Claudio then asks Hero to tell him frankly as to what man she talked to at her chamber-window the previous night. Hero denied having talked to any man at her window. At this, Don Pedro, Claudio and Don John declare that they had personally seen Hero talking to some one Leonato, at this, is convinced and wishes for his death. Hero swoons. Beatrice makes a cry for help. The Friar comes for her help. Leonato wishes that he could disown his daughter. The Friar persuades Leonato to believe that Hero is innocent, for he has seen the changing expressions on her face which speak of her innocence. He asks Hero if there was anyone she was accused of dealing with. Hero says that she knows none. Hero assures her father that if it was proved that she talked with any man, as alleged, she was prepared to be disowned and tortured to death.

At last Friar's suggestion is accepted. She should be given out as dead and funeral rites duly performed. He makes this suggestion for he expects a change in the mind of Claudio when truth would come to light. All withdraw except Beatrice and Benedick.

Benedick confesses his love for Beatrice. Beatrice asks Benedick to punish the avenger of Hero, her cousin. She holds Claudio as the basest man. She demands vengeance upon Claudio. Benedick gives his word to challenge Claudio.

This scene is the climax of this serious plot. While we know that Hero will soon be vindicated, because the agents for vindication are already afoot, the characters most affected and still reeling under the effect of the misfortune. In the first part—the serious—we have the repudiation scene and in the second the resolution of the comic under plot. The way in which these two are welded, shows the consummate constructive skill of Shakespeare.

Scene 2. Borachio and Conrade are summoned before the Sexton. The Sexton acts more sensibly in summoning the Watchmen. The Watchmen report in detail the conversation of Borachio —that Borachio received one thousand ducats from Don John for plotting against Hero. The Sexton, who knows that Don John had run away and that Hero was dead on a charge of slander upon her, soon realizes the gravity of the situation and orders the persons to be bound and presented to Leonato.

It is for the intelligence of Sexton that the clouds of tragedy melt away. This scene marks a further stage in the resolution of the plot, *i. e.*, the untying of the tragic knot. The play now inclines towards comedy.

Act V, Scene 1. Leonato is sad. He does not listen to the soothing counsel of his brother, Antonio. He is convinced that Hero

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is slandered. Don Pedro and Claudio come to take leave. Antonio bursts into rage against them. Leonato then recovers from his melancholy and challenges Claudio for his slander upon his daughter. Antonio also joins his brother.

Benedick comes now. Don Pedro and Claudio expect Benedick to make Leonato and Antonio merry by his wit, but Benedick offers to draw his sword. At first they do not take him seriously and mock him, but Benedick takes Claudio aside and throws a challenge seriously. Don Pedro and Claudio still remain light-hearted, but Benedick responds little to their jests. He repeats his charge that Claudio has caused death to Hero for no lapse on her part. Now Don Pedro and Claudio take him seriously.

Next enter Dogberry, Verges and Watch with Borachio and Conrade. Don Pedro is surprised to see two of his brother's men under arrest. Dogberry makes a statement, which is not understood by them. But Borachio confesses his guilt frankly. Claudio, at this, is overwhelmed with grief and remorse.

Leonato and Claudio re-enter with the Sexton. They know the whole truth, which the Sexton had told them. Claudio feels sorry at his act and submits to Leonato begging him to inflict upon him any punishment the latter chooses. Don Pedro also offers to be punished alike. Leonato requests them to make known to the people of Messina that Hero is innocent and honours her tomb with an epitaph and sings hymns for her. He also proposes to Claudio to marry his brother's daughter, who is the exact copy of Hero. Claudio is overwhelmed at Leonato's kindness and promises to meet him the next morning. Leonato thanks Dogberry for his services. From Borachio's statement, it appears that Margaret was innocently implicated in the plot.

Scene 2. There is an exchange of wit between Benedick and Margaret. Benedick wants to speak to Beatrice and seeks Margaret's assistance. Margaret goes in to inform her mistress. Benedick confesses that he is poor at verse-making. Though he is more in love than all those lovers who are celebrated in heroic poems.

When Beatrice enters, they resume their wit-combat. He first acquaints Beatrice about the challenge that he has thrown to Claudio and that Claudio would be declared a coward if he did not accept it. They are as witty as ever but now they employ wit in playing up to each other, not in running each other down. At the close of the scene, Ursula comes and discloses that the plot involving Hero in slander and public disgrace has been discovered and that Don John is the author of it.

Scene 3. In this scene we see how Claudio does penance before the tomb where Hero is supposed to lie buried. He affixes a poem, written by him, in her honour on the wall of the tomb. This scene serves to prolong our suspense till the final one, where everything ends happily, as it should end in a comedy.

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Scene 4. All the important characters including the Friar assemble, they are soon joined by Claudio and Don Pedro. The ladies are asked to retire. They are to reappear masked when sent for The Friar is happy for what he predicted has come out true. Hero's innocence has been proved. Don Pedro and Claudio greet when they enter. Benedick requests the Friar to unite him in wedlock with Beatrice.

Antonio, who has in the meantime gone out, re-enters with the ladies masked. Antonio points to Hero, who is under mask, whom Claudio is to marry. When she takes off the mask, she appears to be old Hero. She replies that Hero is dead and that she is only a maid. The Friar postpones the explanation of the whole mystery until the marriage rites have been performed.

Benedick and Beatrice cross their wit as usual. Claudio now produces a halting sonnet, which Benedick composed in the honour of Beatrice. Hero produces another evidence declaring Beatrice's love, which she had stolen from the pocket of Beatrice. So they are reconciled. Both of them are happy. The scene closes with a dance.

A Critical Note. There are three strands woven into the plot of *Much Ado About Nothing*. The main story is easily summarised in the following words : "A lover deceived into thinking his betrothed unfaithful by seeing a man at her chamber-window. Claudio, the lover, on the eve of his marriage is deceived into the belief that his betrothed beloved, Hero, is unfaithful. At this deceit, Claudio rejects her before the altar at the time of marriage. Hero, for this humiliation, swoons. It is made known that she is dead. A parish constable Dogberry, who overhears the villainous plotting against Hero, vindicates the innocence of Hero, and Hero then is married to Claudio.

With this serious plot, is interwoven an under-plot, which is comic in spirit. Benedick and Beatrice are the two figures of this under-plot. Both of them profess to be haters of their opposite sex and engage themselves, whenever they meet, in a wit-combat. But with a trick of their friends, they soon realise that they love each other. And, finally, they become husband and wife. In the treatment of this under-plot. Shakespeare has given a fine blending of the serious and the comic. This plot raises no problems, rather it sweetens our feeling towards humanity and it lures us away to the restful and of romance. In the treatment of this play, Shakespeare anticipates a modern conception where an independent bachelor and a high-spirited maid do come closer to each other, but after a violent hanker and floating. Such men and women are found in Shaw. *Much Ado About Nothing* presents a parallelism with Shaw's *You Never Can Tell* where Valentine, 'the duellist of sex' and Gloria Clandon 'the new woman' carry on a verbal warfare like that of Beatrice and Benedick. In Shaw's another play, '*Man and Superman*'. Tainer is like Benedick, a hater of marriage, but, in Bernard Shaw, there is no Beatrice, since Anne is the born wife, the hunter after a husband, not the female 'duellist of sex'.

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Commenting on this plot, Dowden writes that, "Shakespeare's doctrine concerning the war of the sexes is that it is highly a bright prelude to the victory of love and permanent treaty of peace." Indeed, this story is a great contribution of Shakespeare to this play, where the plot is very feeble, loose and inconsistent.

Dogberry and Verges, who constitute the third strand of the play, are evidently Shakespear's own creation. It is Dogberry and Verges who play 'the essential' part of Fool in the *Twelfth Night*, of Touchstone in *As You Like It* and Launce in the *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, and the majority of clowns in Shakespeare's comedies. They have contributed much to the popularity of this play. Without Dogberry and his men the interest would be more than halved. Actually they contribute little to the story, though something to the plot. 'Their happy blunderings help first to tangle and then to unravel the mystery, but they are entirely remote from the tragedy of Hero and the comedy of Beatrice. Their special function is not indeed to provide what is called 'comic relief' and not, like the grave-makers in *Hamlet* or the gardener in *Richard II* to heighten a sense of impending doom and thrill the hearer with a feeling of something beyond the audible words. They are there to keep a serious story from straying outside the limits of comedy....." "Dogberry and Verges are on the plane of Bottom and Quince and conceived with a largeness of heart and sympathy that ought to shame the suburban minds who claim Shakespeare as the spokesman of Snobberry.'' Shakespeare like Dickens laughs with his great comic creations, not at them.

10. CHARACTERS OF THE PLAY

"The ideal of Aristotle, which was also the practice of the classical dramatists has been entirely reversed. The plot which with them held the first place, is now thrust down into the second character which had been the subordinate interest is now treated as the principal element. By the ancients "character" was regarded as the means, and "plot" as the end. With Shakespeare character becomes the end and plot sinks into the position of the means. The centre of gravity has been shifted from plot to character. And character has come to have an independent and intrinsic value of its own. Shakespeare, therefore, never invented stories. He is mainly concerned with men—the Lear, The Shylock, The Richard, and The Hamlet.

(1) Hero

Much Ado About Nothing has two heroines, and both of them get married after much ado. The two plots around them are very weak plots. They only fill the plots and do very little more. They derive their interest mainly from the course of events. Of these two, Hazlitt gives primacy to Hero, who, according to him, "is the principal figure in the piece and leaves an indelible impression on the mind by her beauty, her tenderness and the hard trial of her love." But

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she too is a passive heroine. She does not act. She does not think though she is a heroine of a romantic comedy. She does not dominate the play. In this respect, she is very much different from charming Rosalind and sprightly Portia. "She would have been more effective dramatically, if we could have glimpses of the impulses and instincts, half conscious but vital and forceful, which lie behind the quiescent surface of her mind."

This passivity on her part poses queer questions. What does she exactly feel towards a love, who cannot even woo her? How does she consent, without any protest, to marry a man, who 'has so many times shocked her romantic sentiments about him? An answer to these queer questions lies perhaps in her gentleness and softness, she is so gentle, so amiable and so soft a woman that we have an affection for her. "She has just that air, nay rather just that soul of blend and modes quietness. Quiet and never voluble, she speaks without sting or sharpness." Though she is not Beatrice's equal in wit and brilliance, she is not without wit. In the Mask Scene (II, i) when Don Pedro woos her, she is match for Beatrice herself in wit :

Don Pedro : Lady will you walk about with your friend?

Hero : So, you walk softly, and look sweetly, and say nothing, I am yours for the walk and especially when I walk away.

Don Pedro : With me in your company?

Hero : I may say so, when I please.

Don Pedro : And when please you to say so?

Hero : When I like your favour, for God defend the lute should be like the case.

Don Pedro : My visor is Philemen's roof, within the house is Jove.

Hero : Why then your visor should be thatch'd.

Passive and yielding, Hero is a woman who is destined, from the beginning, to be subservient in a meek, unresting way to fate and fortune. In this respect, she is the very opposite of Beatrice, who resembles one of our modern "bachelor-girls".

She is best at test when the great misfortune befalls her. She accepts the calamity with patience and fortitude without uttering a word. She takes it as if something has come to her from above. When the grave charge of faithlessness is made against her, she does no say a word in defence ; rather she only surrenders saying, "Hath no man's dagger here a point for me, and thereafter" she swoons.

Again, when we meet her after some time, we find her maintaining the same gentleness and unobtrusive vivacity. Unmasking herself she says to Claudio.

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"And when I loved, I was your other wife :
And when you loved, you were my other husband."
—(V. iv.)

Of Hero, Hamilton Mable writes, "Hero is really a secondary figure and it definitely subordinate to Beatrice as Claudio is to Benedick : but the few strokes with which she is drawn reveal with beautiful art, her purity, her simplicity, her womanly power to find refuge in silence and patience.

To this account of the character of Hero may be added the comment of Prof. Deighton :—"Hero though thrown into the shade by the brilliancy of Beatrice's wit and vivacity, is very far from being insignificant in any respect. It is true that except for one scene, her voice is seldom heard and that if the scene were omitted, we should scarcely feel that we knew her less completely. Yet, as with Cordelia in *King Lear*, her presence silently pervades the play—pervades it not merely by force of her misfortunes, but by reason of her modest quietness, her cheerful acquiescence in the superiority of others, her loyalty of love and her readiness to pardon the cowardly wrong that has been done to her."

Hero "herself is the sweet, docile creature, with well-proportioned beauty, intelligence and disposition for affectionateness that so frequently accepts her fate from the arrangement of other people, and with moderate good fortune, may enjoy and confer a temperate happiness in any one, of many possible engagements. Benedick's definition of her excellence is all-sufficient. She claims no commendation in exess, yet were she other than she is, she were unhandsome and being no other but as she is, Benedick and such as he may not like her, but without art or invention of coquetry, she will be one of the last to go through her teens without a husband not withstanding."

It is wonderful how Shakespeare has been able to interest us by the more attraction of simple, affectionate and cheerful disposition in a female character with scarcely a touch of passion and for independent will so nearly as nonentity.

(2) Claudio

Claudio is very fainty sketched. His portrait is very imperfect. He is not wanting in personality, but "he is always passing from one hectic sentiments to another without ever stopping to consider how the variable impulses may be mutually reconciled." Shylock is another character of Shakespeare who is a bundle of confusions. But Shylock, like a living man retains the characteristic quality of his mind and acts boldly even in the adverse sircumstances. Claudio, on the other hand, is content in expressing only those sentiments as are necessary to the exigencies of the plot. He has no personality of his own. And any man, "Who falls in love with a peculiar women then woos her by proxy, gets suspicious about the intentions of the friend who has done the wooing for him, is engaged to the lady, then shortly after is easily led to suspect her virtue, condemns her on the slightest

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evidence, laments at what he thinks is her grave, and finally, before the tears are dry, passes on to marry another woman," cannot be a men with his individual personality. He is only a "conglomeration of romantic postures."

From the aforesaid details of his behaviour, we can say that Claudio is a character who cannot rouse warm and amiable feelings. On the other hand, he may completely repel us. There are many critics who feel they are unable to reconcile themselves to the character of Claudio. "The facts of the play, no doubt' justify such a view, but the point of view set in the play, does not justify such a view. The play is a comedy in which the persons do indeed make or have much ado but all this much is plainly about nothing." Let us not be very severe with him. Let us not rouse severe feelings against him. Let us be rather sympathetic with him. We cannot speak of him, as Prof. Deighton remarks, with justice and patience, because he very faintly sketched and also because the fact of the play go very much against him.

From the very beginning of the play, Shakespeare has shown him a youthful man to whom war, glory and adventure were more than love.

"But now I am returned and that war thoughts
Have left their place vacant, in their rooms
Come thronging soft and delicate desires.
All prompting me how fair young Hero is,
Saying, I liked her are I went to wars." —(I. i.)

"Brave, honourable and pure in heart, he is so far fitted to be the wooer of the gentle and modest Hero."—Boas.

While Claudio is superficial in nature and fickle in mind, he is very much a fortune-hunter. His specific question. "Hath Leonato any son, my lord," shows his greed for money. In many ways, therefore, he represents a familiar type of young English man "—The well connected person of the usual antecedents, feather-headed and ficklemind conscious of social advantages insistent on privilege, oblivious of civic duty, indefatigable in the pursuit of pleasure, insanely attached to from, always ready for a 'rag' (what) is the Beatrice and Benedick plot but a first-rate 'rage'), ready to fall in love instantly, to propose one day, marry the next, and repent the day after, intensely selfish quick to take offence, blindly furious in paying back supposed slights or injuries—and yet, after all, a pleasant agreeable fellow, with good stuff in him and as physically fearless as he is mentally and morally timorous."—George Sampson.

Claudio is worst in his conduct, when "instead of withdrawing in silence," in the church-scene, "he prefers, like the blockhead he is, to confront her in the church, before the altar, and in the hearing of everyone overwhelms her with coarse speeches and low accusations"—George Brandes. Saying not a word of objection before going to church and with a mean and malicious revenge, Claudio

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plays the role of the injured lover and moralises on the deception to which men subject themselves unknowingly. "O, what men dare do ! what men do ! what men daily do, not knowing what they do." Most insipid stuff for which we could give him a knock on the pate !

"Claudio's behaviour cannot be defensible unless we imagine that Shakespeare has the purpose of irony. There can be little doubt that he is a conceited fool—and Shakespeare has no illusions about him. But fools are often lucky. And, that explains why Hero does not finally reject him. Such fools are in the world and have often a smooth and prosperous life. Shakespeare hits him off with irony."

(3) Beatrice and Benedick

Beatrice and Benedick are Shakespeare's own invention. It is they, not Hero and Claudio who make the play popular. It is said that Beatrice is in the line of Shakespeare's sparkling heroines. And, Benedick too is not without his ancestors. He is Biron grown into an experienced man of the world. He is Mercutio extended and matched with an opposite, as keen in fence as he be to Gratiano, refined and made fit for a decent society."

Both are witty, independent, proud, scornful and highly intellectual. Both of them are serious, serious enough when a serious occasion calls for their serious sympathy. Beatrice is a witty sensible and resourceful woman. She is the kind of woman than one meets in a modern comedy. "Benedick is a soldier, a gentleman and something of a scholar. In camps and schools he has preserved until manhood a boyish contempt for women. No amorist himself, he views the amorous follies of his friends with amused wonder, like other heretics he erects his incapacity into a creed and poses invincible against all assaults of passion."—J. Smith.

Indeed Shakespeare has shown great skill in the portraits of the characters of these two. Hazlitt remarks, and remarks very aptly one point in regard to the story of Beatrice and Benedick ; Perhaps that middle-point of comedy was never more nicely hit in which the ludicrous blends with the tender and our follies turning round against themselves in support of our affections retain nothing but their humanity. This part of the play may be described as a comedy of intellect. It is made up of the tricks which the intelligence plays with itself in trying to assert an unjustifiable per-eminence in the human make-up" Beatrice and Benedick are intelligent each always trying to show more intelligence over the other and repressing their emotions.

At the opening of the play, we find that both of them know each other. And we also find that there is something deeper in this acquaintance than the mutual disdain they profess for each other. Had it not been so, why should Beatrice be interested in knowing about the performance of Benedick only of all the warriors and why should she engage herself in a skirmish of wit with him. She is

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indeed out to find opportunities to have a wit-combat with him. There are two interesting points that are to be noted about her. The language that Beatrice uses in railing at Benedick is full of amorous suggestions. Secondly, when she learns of the proposed marriage between Hero and Claudio, she makes a meaningful observation—"Thus goes everyone to the world but I, and I am sun-burnt. I may sit in a corner and cry, Heigh-ho for a husband"—might appear to have been said in a jest, but there is so much of method in her raillery that one suspects that things are deeper than what they appear to be, Benedick is more revealing. He, holds women to scorn but he acknowledges that he does so more as a custom. It is true that he proclaims that he will live a bachelor and that he will not marry Beatrice "though she were endowed with all that Adam had left him before he transgresed."—(Act II, Scene i). "But it is significant that a least the possibility of his marrying her occurs to him even though Don Pedro, before whom he deprecates the suggestion has told him. 'The Lady Beatrice hath a quarrel to you.' 'Benedick is an avowed misogynist but he protests that he is loved of all ladies, Beatrice alone excepted. Why should Benedick feel it necessary to remind Beatrice of all persons that he loves no woman and why should Beatrice be anxious to retort that she had rather her dog bark at a cross than a man swear he loves her ?"

Beatrice and Benedick are intellectuals. They try to measure life with the help of intelligence. They, therefore, ignore and seek to suppress the impulses and emotions of the heart. It is for this reason that they show antipathy to persons of the opposite sex. "There is the sub-conscious feeling in them that an alliance with the opposite sex will mean the end of independence. It is the intellectual pride which makes Beatrice a male-hater and Benedick a misogynist, but they are mutually attracted, because each finds in the other, in spite of superficial antagonism, a kindred spirit, whom it is pleasure to meet and subdue. This pride of intellect colours their ideals, distorts their arguments and determines the very symbols in which their thoughts are expressed."

Shakespeare's commentators hold that in plays belonging to Shakespeare's early period there is a remarkable preponderence of bad women, because the little experience he had acquired of the female sex was not ripe or matured one. In the second period another type of female character prevails. While we cannot mistake a certain family resemblance between Silvia in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*. Rosaline and her companions, Portia and Nerissa, Rosalind and Beatrice, all these possess, in different degrees, that vein of wit which makes them mistresses of conversation, and which, however modest the heart may be, often permits the tongue to speak immodestly. Again, they have all more or less preponderating development of the understanding, of the intellectual powers, often too of those, of the will, a development which at times seems to step beyond the limits of the feminine nature. They have all more or less something of acute womanly forwardness in their nature, something of domineering superiority, and therefore the men in contact

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with them play more or less a subordinate part or at any rate have trouble in making themselves a match for the women of their choice. In this Portia, he has depicted an ideal of womanhood, bordering on perfection, not to be surpassed by any man in strength of wit and self-mastery in mind and circumspection. In his later works. Shakespeare has dropped this kind of feminine ideal. A still deeper intimacy with women's nature made him at last tarry with greater delight on the feeling side of the womanly character and with slight touches, he delineated those tender beings, who persevere rather in the spheres of instinctive life which is assigned to the woman, who would avoid immodest words as well as actions, who were devoid of intellectual superiority, but who possess, in the surity of their feelings, a far more certain power than those former favourites of Shakespeare would hardly have expressed with emphasis as in *Lear* —that "a voice ever soft, gentle and low was an excellent thing in woman." In this manner Shakespeare's knowledge of the female sex became more and refined and his female characters, rise in inner value and in moral beauty.

The Wit of Beatrice and Benedick—a Contrast. Speaking of the wit of Beatrice and Benedick, Hudson writes, "The wit of Beatrice and Benedick, though seeming at first view much the same, is nicely discriminated. Beatrice, intelligent as she is, has little of reflection in her wit, but throws it off in rapid flashes whenever any object ministers a spark to her fancy. Though of the most piercing keenness and the most exquisite aptness, there is no ill-nature about it: it stings but does not poison. The offspring merely of the moment and the occasion, it catches the apprehension, but quickly slides from the memory. Its agility is infinite. The wit of Benedick on the other hand, springs more from reflection and grows with the growth of thought. With all the pungency, and nearly all the pleasantry, of Beatrice's it has less of spontaneous volubility. Hence in their skirmishes she always gets the better of him, biting him so swiftly and in so many places as to bewilder his aim. But he makes ample amends when out of her presence; then he trundles off jests in whole paragraphs. In short, if his wit be slower, it is also stronger than hers; not so agile of movement but more weighty of matter it shines less but burns more, and as it springs much less out of the occasion, so it bears repeating much better. The effect of the serious events in bringing these persons to an armistice of wit is a happy stroke of art, and perhaps some such thing was necessary to prevent the impression of their being jesters by trade. 'It proves, at least, that Beatrice is a witty women, not a female wit."

The remarks of Mrs. Jameson may be found useful in the context of the wit of Beatrice and Benedick. "Infinite skill, as well as humour, is shown in making this pair of airy beings the exact counterpart of each other, but of the two portraits, that of Benedick is by far the most pleasing, because of the independence and gay indifference of temper, the laughing defiance of love and marriage, the satirical freedom of expression, common to both are more becoming to the

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masculine than to the female character. Any woman might love a cavalier as Benedick and be proud of his affection, his wit, his gaiety sits so gracefully upon him, and his light scoffs against the power of love are but just sufficient to render more piquant the conquest of this 'heretic' in despite of beauty.' But a man might well be pardoned who should shrink from encountering such a spirit as that of Beatrice, unless, indeed, he had 'served an apprenticeship to the taming school.' The wit of Beatrice, is less good-humoured than that of Benedick, or from the difference of sex, appears so. It is observable that the power is throughout on her side and the sympathy and interest on his ; which by reversing the usual order of things seems to excite us against the grain, if I may use such an expression. In all their encounters, she constantly gets the better of him.....Beatrice, woman-like generally has the first word and will have the last."

Hero and Beatrice—a Contrast. Hero and Beatrice are poles apart. Hero is gentle, meek, yielding and passive with no will of her own. She does what her father wants her to do. Rather, she seeks to do what her father bids her to do. In fact, Hero has never learn to act on her own. She even does not learn to think. Yet there is something atractive in her very meekness, in her very gentleness, in her very amiableness and in her very softness. "She has just that air, nay rather just that soul of bland and modest quietness." Quiet and never voluble, she speaks without sting or sharpness." These qualities win her our admiration.

Beatrice, on the other hand, is endowed with individual will and personality. She is a distinct character. She convers her sensitiveness under a mask of self-assertion and certain measure of mannishness. Beatrice is assertive She knows what is due to her. Hero is passive. She does not know her own claims. Beatrice can stand any situation and answer it in a most woman-like manner. Hero cannot make herself mistress of the situation. She simply surrenders and swoons straightway.

(4) Don John

Don John is the villain of the Hero-Claudio story. He is of the tribe of Edmund in *King Lear* and Iago in *Othello*. He is, as Coleridge says, the main-spring of the plot. He is a mischiefmaker and derives pleasure in making a mischief. He knows no motive for his villainy. In Bandello's story, which is the source of the Hero-Claudio story, the villain is a supplanted rival, but Shakespeare never makes rivalry in love a motive for villainy. To him, villains are there to enjoy their devilry. They cannot stand the sight of goodness.

Don John is a bastard brother of Don Pedro. The main spring of his action is "a general moroseness which sets him at war with all mankind. Scowling and laconic admist the merry company gathered under his roof, he is a very death's head at a feast"—Boas. His brother has forgiven him for his faults and he has recently reconciled to him, but for his character, he keeps on hating him. He says, "I had rather be canker in a hedge than a rose in his grace." When he comes to know about the marriage of Claudio with Hero, out of his

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villainy, immediately asks, "Will it serve for any model to built mischief on ?" —(I, iii).

Don John says about himself, "I am a plain dealing villain." This is perfectly true. "Among Shakespeare's malefactor, he is distinguished by his complete lack of humour and of the kindered power to dissemble his real nature. As he says to himself. 'I can not hide what I am—it better fits my blood to be disdained of all than to fashion a carriage to rob love from any.' It would seem as if the dramatist in this most radiant of comedies had not wished to focus our attention upon the villain by investing him with the fascination which underlies evil-doing, masquerading under the guise of good-humoured honesty. Moreover, we are not inclined to augur very disastrous results from the schemes of a mischief-maker who wears his heart upon his sleeve in so transparent a fashion and who seems so ill fitted for an intriguer's part"—Boas. Commenting on the character of Don John, Prof. Deighton writes, "In Bandello's novel Don John's counterpart is a disappointed lover who would punish the object of his love for having refused him. Shakespeare's villain, less vindictive—towards Hero not vindictive at all in the proper sense of the word, is also less commonplace. In much of his character, Don John bears a family likeness to Edmund in *Lear* and we may be sure that Shakespeare did not affix the stigma of bastardy without an object." Don John does belong to the tribe of Iago, but he is not so subtle a villain as the latter is. Don John, unlike Iago, confides in others. He, unlike Richard, does not and cannot conceal his malice. Critics have found fault with Shakespeare, though it is not a necessary fault in regard to the creation of Don John's character, and hold that his creation is not in the keeping of truth and nature of the circumstances. "They would prefer, apparently the more commonplace character of disappointed rival in love, whose guilt might be explained away into a pressure of violent motives. But Shakespeare saw deeper into a human nature. And his wisest departure from the old story is in making John a morose, sullen, ill conditioned rascal, whose innate malice renders the joy of others a pain, and the pain of others a joy to him."—Hudson.

Stopford Brooke makes a very valuable comment on Don John. "One dark character is the blackness, which sets off the brightness of the play. Don John, the bastard brother of the prince, has no redeeming quality. When Shakespeare made a bad man, he generally was stern enough to make him villainously bad. He knew that evil, when it was nourished, gave birth to more and more of evil, when till it consumed itself. The fate of evil is to be done to death by its own venom, perhaps by its own children, so naturally moral in the universe. Don John, soured by his bastardy, has cherished envy as his sweetheart and the snake that lives in it has so poisoned his soul that he belies an innocent girl only because he wishes to feed the snake he loves. He has sinned against the Prince, his brother, and is now forgiven and favoured by him. He hates his brother, and Claudio, his brother's friend, for their kindness and forgiveness. And

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he devises with brave Borachio that the Prince and Claudio shall hear Margaret in the shape of Hero talk with Borachio out of a window as if she were his mistress. So the treacherous dog slays, for all he knows, an innocent sweet girl—a very flower of youth and beauty. What is the use of him? Some say, why to make the story out of which the play is woven, to make the little plot which is to be happily ended. He comes in just to do that, and when the mischievous knot he has tied is undone, he slips away to Naples and no one ever thinks of him again till the last two lines of the play. Shakespeare does not like the villain to escape, as the villain so often does in real life. He does, on the whole, make a point of poetic justice. And, Don John is seized and punished when the fun is over."

(5) Dogberry and Verges

Dogberry and Verges are delightful creation of the play. They have contributed to the popularity of the play. "Without Dogberry and Verges the interest would be more than halved. Dogberry is a sheer delight, his blundering garrulity, his absurd pomposity, his stuffed self importance so strangely in contrast to his stupidity are things we like whole heartedly." George Sampson writes, "Dogberry and Verges are on the plane of Bottom and Quince and are conceived with a largeness of heart and sympathy that ought to shame the suburban minds that claim Shakespeare as spokesman of Snobbery... ...Dogberry's fatuity is stupendous, but we enjoy him because Shakespeare himself enjoyed him." Speaking of these two lovely characters, Prof. Dowden adds, "Shakespeare does not seem to feel that Dogberry and Verges are creatures of another breed from himself. He stands, it is true, at the opposite pole of humanity; neverthless a potential Dogberry element existed even in Shakespeare." It is only Coleridge who speaks of these two characters "as forced into the service of the plot when any other less ingeniously absurd watchman would have answered the mere necessities of action." Miss Grace Trenery joining issue with Coleridge retorts that "less ingeniously absurd watchman would not have possessed just the mixture of shrewdness and folly that led at once to the prompt capture of the delinquents and to the fatal delay in the exposure of the conspiracy." She further writes, "Dogberry is not a complete fool, but we must, apologetically, write him down an ass." The criticism levelled by Coleridge or Miss Grace Trenery does not help us, because it does not explain the character of Dogberry and Verges. In fact, all the critics, who try to measure the exact proportion between folly and shrewdness in Dogberry are on the wrong track. It is not the shrewdness on the part of Dogberry that leads to discovery of the conspiracy and if there was a delay in the exposure of the conspiracy, it too could not be accounted for his intelligence. "The truth about Dogberry is that he lives in a fantastic world of his own with its peculiar notions about man's character and his duties in relation to society.....His words and deeds have not the same meaning in his world as they have in ours."

The comic power has been concentrated in Dogberry. "The dutiful constable, Dogberry, who considers his position so very

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important and maintains it so zealously, but who is always uttering contradictory maxims and precepts, who is so presumptuous and yet so modest, who looks at things with so correct an eye and yet pronounces such foolish judgments, talks so much and yet says so little in fact, perpetually contradicts himself giving orders for what he advises to be left undone, entreating to be registered an ass and yet is the very one to discover nothing which is the cause of the 'much ado'. He is the chief representative of that view of life upon which the whole is based, in as much as its comic power is exhibited most strongly and most directly in him. For this contrast, which, in accordance with its nature, usually appears divided between its two poles, is, so to say, individualised in him, that is united in the one individual and fully reflected in his inconsistent and ever contradictory doings and resolves thoughts and sayings. Dogberry personifies, if we may say so, the spirit and his meaning of the whole, and, therefore, plays essentially the same part as the Fool in *Twelfth Night*. Touchstone in *As You Like It*, Launce in the *Two Gentlemen of Verona* and the majority of Clowns in Shakespeare's Comedies."—Ulrici.

Dr. Sen Gupta makes a very interesting and illuminating comment on Dogberry. Speaking of him, he writes, "Dogberry claims that he has "everything handsome about him."—(Act IV, Scene ii). No wonder that his conception of the duties of the Master Constable should have the hall-mark of handsomeness on it. The watchmen, according to him, have the right to stay even the prince if they happen to meet him at night, but they will stop him provided he is willing, for it is an offence to stay a man against his will. They are to bid any man stand in the prince's name, but if any vagrant does not care for the prince's name, they must not meddle with him—(Act III, Scene iii). It is a most disgusting vice in members of the constabulary to make a noise : so nigth-watchmen should sleep rather than talk. Constables and watchmen have a good many unpleasant things to do because they have to come in touch with the dirtier underside of life. But Dogberry has dreamt away all that is ugly and disgusting and made everything handsome. He is not a fool in the ordinary sense of the term. He does not bungle his work, he does not touch it at all. He lives in his own world in which drunkards may be left alone till they are sober and thieves are to be 'suspected but not meddled with'. He is both an ass and a wise fellow, because the distinction between folly and wisdom does not exist in his world. All his folly proceeds from on original philosophy which is reflected not only in his notions of a policeman's duties but also in his attitude to morality. He knows as a policeman that ducats are indissolubly associated with stealing, and if Hero's name is besmirched by man who received ducats for his dirty work, it is for him 'flat burglary ever was committed.'—(Act IV, Scene ii). As he lives in a world untouched by our conceptions of penology, the distinctions made by us between one crime and another do not exist for him, and the same offence may be lechery, libel, burglary or anything else. It does not follow that he is incapable of hair-splitting distinctions, only we are as incompetent to

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understand his logic as he is to follow ours. He lumps together lechery, libel and burglary, but at the same time simple slander alone has for him six distinct items : 'Marry Sir, they had committed fales report, moreover, they have spoken untruths, secondarily, they are slanders sixth and lastly, they have belied a lady; thirdly, they have verified unjust things ; and do conclude, they are lying knaves'.—(Act V, Scene i). We may call him tedious, but the charge will pass him by, because the word has one meaning for him and another for us. Indeed, although he tires Leonato by his sixthlies and thirdlies, he makes handsome apologies for his friend, Verges who being an old man 'speaks a little of the matter', because, 'his wits are not so blunt' as Dogberry expects (Act III, Scene v). Dogberry's 'quaint blundering and misprisions of meaning' as Hazlitt calls them, have a logic and are not as inconsequential and meaningless as they appear to be at first sight. They are the offshoots of a particular state of mind and are thus different from the mistakes committed by Middleton's Blurt and similar other characters in Elizabethan Comedy. It is a state of mind not without a beauty of its own : a mind that makes its own reality and owes no homage to ours. If we remember this it becomes easy to understand the complete self-assurance with which Dogberry lives and flourishes in his own world. This is reflected in this mundane world of ours, in the importance he attaches to himself—an importance so great indeed, that when the question is asked, 'which be the malefactors ?' he returns the prompt response, 'Marry, that am I and my partner'—(Act IV, Scene ii). A word so high sounding as 'malefactor,' whatever its meaning, belongs by inalienable right to Dogberry and his partner : none else may have a claim to it. It is from this point of view that we are to appreciate his reactions to Conrade's calling him 'an ass' (Act IV, Scene ii). The epithet irritates him and he wants it to be taken into account when punishment is dealt out to the offender. But it also gives rise to the deepest yearning in his soul—'O that I have been writ down an ass' (Act IV, Scene ii) of all the unsatisfied aspirations expressed in literature, this is certainly the most stupendous and it may be taken as a proof of the novelty of Dogberry's word that the greatest yearning for a man there is to be remembered as an ass.'

(6) **Other Characters.** There are some other characters in the play. While they are vitally important for the story of the play, they do not have much to contribute to their individuality. Leonato is the Governor of Messina. Hero is his daughter. As a father of the daughter, he has all love and affection for her. Antonio, Leonato's brother, may also be placed at par with Leonato. Both of them have similarity of character. Both are weak from servility but both retain the hot temper of their youth. This temper is evident from :

> "I know not, if they speak but truth of her,
> These hands shall tear her, if they wrong her honour,
> The proudest of them shall well hear of it.
> Time hath not yet so dried this blood of mine,
> Nor age so eat up my invention. —(IV.i).

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Any father, on a slandering of his daughter would have shown so much of rage and anger, but Leonato, even in such a temper, remains majestic.

But they are different too. They differ only as two apples differ. And Antonio is a more decayed apple than Leonato.

As a matter of fact, the characters of this play have been, for the most part, disposed in two—Antonio and Leonato, Prince Don Pedro and Claudio, Dogberry and Verges, Hero and Ursula, Borachio and Conrade, and Beatrice and Benedick. Each of these doublets represent a single type and the type being set forth in two forms with individual differences, is all more fully represented.

Prince Don Pedro and Claudio image young nobles of the time. War is their business. Love is their relaxation. Incessant chaff is their conversation. They are never serious except on points of honour. On that they are sensitive and fretful as a porcupine. They are capable of real friendship. When Benedick touches them at the pulse of their friendship, they show strength and intimacy. In fact, they have not been fully sketched. In the outline of these two characters, Shakespeare has tried to present the type of lords and princes that he knew in his times. But with a human touch he has made them universal.

Ursula, who is an attendant to Hero and Beatrice, is just the type of Hero. Meek, gentle and yielding and soft she is.

Borachio and Conrade are the two of the same type. They are the hired persons of Don John, the villain. They are the instruments who caused the evil. In fact, it is the mind of Borachio, which suggests the method of slandering Hero. Replying to Don John, he says, "I think I told your lordship a year since how much I am in favour of Margaret, the waiting-gentlewoman to Hero....."

".....The poison of that lies in you to temper : go you to the prince, your brother, spare not to tell him that he hath wronged his honour in marrying the renowned Claudio, whose estimation do you mightly hold up, to a contaminated stare such a one as Hero." The evil-doer is Borachio. He is intelligent as also villainous. In fact, these two persons turn the whole play into a tragedy. They act as forces to take the course of the play to a dangerous catastrophe, but "Shakespeare's grasp of his materials is so firm and his skill so magical that the movement of the comedy, introducing the baser and gayer elements, the gloom of the most hopeless potential tragedy and the gaiety of the most audacious wit, is never for an instant uncertain or wandering, but bears steadfastly on to an issue which gains its deepest interest from the background of villainy and treachery against which it is accomplished. It was a piece of Shakespeare's audacity to fasten upon a plot which in more than one version had a tragic ending and in every version involved the blackest elements of character and snatch from the peril inherent in his 'material the most moving element in a happy ending of the basest plot."

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(7) A Missing Character There is another character of the play,

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which draws our attention. She is never presented by Shakespeare. And she is Hero's mother, surely a mention of her has been made by Shakespeare but then she never appears as character of life and blood. Normally one could ignore her, but in view of the Hero's misery and suffering, one could not help feeling her absence. Her need appears to be greater when Hero's father, Leonato, furiously joins in the hunt against her. The play exhibits Hero as entirely motherless.

11 TIME AND DURATION OF THE ACTION

Most critics accept Mr. P. A. Daniel's analysis contributed to the *New Shakespeare Society Translations, 1879*. His time-analysis is as under :

Day 1. Act I, i-iii ; Act II, i-ii (Monday afternoon).
Day 2. Act II, iii ; Act III. i-iii.
Day 3. Act III. iv-v ; Act IV, i-ii ; Act V, i-ii and part of iii.
Day 4. Act V, Part of iii and iv (Thursday morning).

But the action of the play is included within nine days, with intervals of 3 blank days *viz.*, Thursday, Friday and Saturday, commencing from Monday to Tuesday. Commenting on this scheme Mr. Daniel Says—

"The first Tuesday even in this scene might very well be left a blank and II, ii be included in the opening Monday."

"I believe, however, that just as the prince forgets his determination to stay (at least a month) at Messina (see I. i. 115-16 and III. ii 1-2), so the 'just Seven-night' (See II. i. 337) to the wedding was also either forgotten or intentionally set aside, and that only four consecutive days are actually included in the action of the drama."

Though the action of the play is compressed into a short period, Shakespeare gives free scope to breath and perspective by deft touches here and there. "He gives his characters pass, he exhibits their action as an episode in a large social." Both Benedick and Claudio had been in Messina before. Benedick has crossed swords with Beatrice in wit-combats. Don Pedro too had passed through Messina on his way to the wars. Claudio had already looked upon Hero with a soldier's eye. When the play opens, the principal characters had already known each other for several months. Borachio had been enjoying the favour of Margaret for a year. Besides the action is not severely restricted to the actual *dramatic personae* who appear on the stage. Leonato mentions an uncle of Claudio who will be very glad of the military feats of his nephew displaced in Don Pedro's attempt to quell a rebellion fermented by his wicked bastard brother, Don John. A son of Antonio flits across the stage in Act I. Sc. ii, along with other attendants, arranging the 'great supper' in the Hall of Leonato's house. Such deft touches, strays and incidental references produce the ("time illusion") or illusion of a long direction and of the story taking place on wider canvas than the actual duration of nine days.

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12. IMPROBABILITIES IN THE PLAY

Many over-fastidious critics have found fault with the play on account of many discrepancies and improbabilities in the plot or inconsistencies in line of its characters which are no doubt true to some extent. But we must not forget that *Much Ado About Nothing* is a romantic comedy in which certain assumptions made by the poet are to be taken for granted and not disputed. The story is laid in a setting which is instinct with romance and remarkable for its poetic charm and in an age far removed from the matter of fact and prosaic modern age. "The true pleasure we drive from theatrical performances," says Coleridge, "arises from the fact that they are unreal and fictitious." Shakespeare's comedies are meant to create for his audience an illusion of reality in a romantic atmosphere through an artist's vision. The way of it is that of the imagination and genuine poetry rather than that of pure reason. So in a romantic comedy the hard criterion of reality applicable to this matter of fact world of woes is to be laid aside to some extent at least.

Technically speaking, as we have already seen, it is the most close-knit of the comedies except for a certain careless awkwardness about the Borachio-Margaret plot. Apart from this there are no loose ends in the play nor even an useless appendage not contributing to the main action, like the Silvius Phebe episode in *As You Like It*.

Nevertheless let us make a brief excursion into this vexed question of minor improbabilities with certain unimaginative critics of Shakespeare.

The Hero-Claudio story containing the main action of the play be divided into three parts. The first part relates to the proxy wooing. The second concerns Hero's repudiation. The third brings forth the final restoration. The first part, that is the part of the proxy-wooing has no consistency. Don Pedro offers to woo Hero for no assigned reason. Claudio may be waiting for it, but in the absence of an express request from Claudio, Don Pedro's taking upon himself the wooing of Hero appears to be rather very strange, howsoever great friends they may be. To some, it may even appear improbable.

Then Don Pedro disguises himself as Claudio at the masked ball, woos and wins Hero, informs her father and then hands her over to Claudio. Many complications arise here. Leonato, when he has been informed by Don Pedro, feels happy at the alliance, but does not mention anything to Hero. This appears as improbable. No father will keep things hidden from his daughter, when they relate to her marriage alliance.

What appears to be more improbable, in this connection, is that Hero, who is wooed and won, makes no response to the love of Claudio, nor does she show any sign of love during the proxy-wooing It is doubtful whether she is even aware of it. In fact, during most of the play, she is a mere cipher. Against such passivity on her part it is difficult to accept that Hero accepts Claudio's love.

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Borachio remains unrecognised in the company of his master, Don John, when he has been intimate with Margaret, Hero's waiting-woman. This again is an improbability.

In Act II, Scene i. there is a conversation between Don John and Claudio. Don John knows fully well that he is talking to Claudio but because the latter is in disguise, Don John pretends not to know and asks him if he is Benedick. Claudio poses himself to be Benedick. Then Don John discloses the secret of Don Pedro's love for Hero, a fact which Claudio already knows. Claudio does not make an answer to it and keeps quiet. Both these things, that is Don John's knowledge about Claudio, for being Claudio, and then disclosing to him a secret which the latter knows and Claudio's keeping silent about the secret are an improbability.

Shakespeare devised the plot of the proxy-wooing perhaps with a view to proving that Claudio is a man, unintelligent and suspicious. On the other hand, Don Pedro, his friend is a man of intelligence and quick perception. What is strange about them is that both of them, quite different from each other in the degree of intelligence, have been deceived by one man and by one devise. The fooling of them at one time, in a way, is rather improbable.

Act II, Scene ii, introduces, once again, Don John. He comes to know that Claudio is to be married to Hero. Borachio, his follower, at this replies, "My lord, but I can cross it." Then is unfolded the beginning of the third plot, the unchastity plot, as we call it. The extraordinary manner and the abrupt opening of this plot sounds like a part, not of a new plot, but of a new play. This again is an improbability.

Then the unchastity plot has its own weakness. Borachio makes use of Margaret to plot against Hero and, in doing so, makes Margaret call him as Claudio with reasonable loudness. He himself calls him as Hero. Normally, when Margaret plays as a fool in the hands of Borachio, she should know the plot itself and the purpose of it, but strangely she appears to know nothing about it, for she makes no mention to Hero about it. This again is a striking improbability, because no such interview is possible at midnight without guilty collusion on the part of Margaret. And, the pity is that even Leonato understands her as innocent. The actual charge of unchastity made in the third plot is not even theatrically convincing. It is neither a dramatic case. The charge is that Hero talks with a man. But where is the man? We do not hear his accusation. And the accusation could not have been made unless the accuser is produced. The charge made therefore is improbable. In the original story of Ariosto and Bendello the charges made could not have been refused.

To Sum Up. Shakespeare's comedies are a very congruous and harmonious mixture of romance and comedy. Romance argues an attitude of mind which expects us to believe in the love of the seemingly impossible. It gives a looseness to imagination and a

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proneness for the colourful and picturesque which are not to be found in real life. This is Shakespeare's justification for improbabilities, discrepancies and inconsistencies in his plots, characters and incidents. Captions and unimaginative critics have made too much of them. Many have said that Shakespeare did not take the trouble to correct them ; others have argued the theory of an earlier play and its subsequent revison.

But no critic has defended the inconsistencies in the characters of Claudio and Margaret and the entire Margaret Borachio episode. Claudio has been classed among "psychological abortions" and set down as 'absolutely insufferable,' not without good reason. "Is he a gentleman ?" asks a German critic. "When in an interview with Hero's father, he thoughtlessly lays his hand upon his sword-hilt, and the old man in his excitement suspects him of meditating a personal attack, he repels the suspicion (as to whether he is a gentleman or not) with dignity." His frivolous credulity with which he accepts Don John's calumnies, the malicious revenge he takes upon his betrothed, the heartless way in which he jeers at Benedick, his hiring of some musicians to sing an elegy in Hero's memory to expiate his villainy, the complacent manner in which he shifts his crime from himself "slanderous tongues", the declaration of his precious love for her in the same breath—all these make him an aesthetically impossible character.

Besides this, the character of Hero does not also seem to have been drawn in Shakespeare's most characteristic manner. Dramatically, she is most ineffective being too passive ; she does not seem even to think, as she is extraordinarily tender and unsophisticated. The manner in which she is wooed by one man and then passed on to another is very peculiar and most extraordinary. She seems to be sadly lacking in personality. It is not known how she reacts to the vicarious courtship of Don Pedro, acting as a proxy for Claudio. Above all, one simply is shocked how without uttering any word of protest or giving a moment's reflection, she consents to be the wife of a man who has so many times and so rudely shocked her romantic sentiment about him. Strangely enough, the dramatist makes no attempt to plumb the depths of her sensitive soul or explore the contradiction, conflicts and compromises which make up the human personality (Hero) he has created !

Likewise, the Margaret-Borachio episode is full of discrepancies, which militate against our conviction. Apart from her readiness to play a part from which any sensible and virtuous would have shuddered and recoiled, *viz.*, her impersonation of Hero, her strange behaviour after the rejection of her mistress, *i.e.*, to say her failure to establish their chastity, her silence about the part she played the previous night by which the calamity of repudiations came about, makes her character really inexplicable. It is this that makes the character of Margaret improbable and inconsistent.

How is it that Shakespeare got himself involved in these difficulties ? Presumably he mixed together both the stories of Bandello

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and Ariosto. "In Ariosto, there is a guilty impersonating woman, and no impersonating man ; in Bandello, there is an impersonating man and no impersonating woman. Shakespeare tries to use the guilty, impersonating lady of Ariosto and the disguised sham gallant of Bandello and then declares the impersonating lady innocent. The result is a tangle that cannot be set right."—(Sampson). The editors of *The New Shakespeare*, explain it away as a "loose end caused by revision" in his attempt to shift the main centre of interest from the Hero-Claudio story to the Beatrice-Benedick story, entailing considerable abridgement of the other sub-plot, *viz.*, the Margaret-Borachio story. This view is held by Quiller-Couch and Dover Wilson. Whatever it may be, the inherent improbability of the Margaret-Borachio story and the character of Margaret itself are an admitted facts which are really inexplicable.

13. SHAKESPEARE'S HUMOUR

Humour arises from intellectual perception of the weakness or incongruity of person, events and situations. Humour, with Shakespeare, is not an acquired thing but an innate gift. He cannot help being humorous with any situation or person to throw light on its comicality but this perception is invariable conjoined with a touch of pathos or pity in the background of his mind. "In his smiles there is forbearance—in his love there is kindness." His humour is kindly, genial and tolerant. With him every instance of humour involves an element of pathos or pity as mere laughter wearies him, sympathy and not satire is the inspiration of his comic spirit—With him tragedy and comedy have no border-line in between, for even every embodiment of thought of passion or of will is full of tragic potentialities, when it passes beyond the normal standard, it is comic, *i.e.*, both in the tragic and comic spheres there is incongruity to be found. It is to be noted that this comic spirit consisting of the intellectual perception of departures from the norm of conduct, is only fitfully present in Shakespeare. Even in purely comic characters like Benedick and Beatrice—examples of the true comic spirit—the interest of romance dominates as when in the last scene they finally emerge as a hero and heroine of romance.

There are three degrees of humour. Writers (humorists) may be ranged in three classes with regard to their possession of humour. There is first the *essential or thorough going humorist*—the man who laughs at everything, for whom every conceivable thing has its humorous side and that the most important. And, that is the true humorist. There is next, the *potential or the facultative humorist*, who takes a greater or less proportion of life seriously and laughs at the rest. This is undoubtedly the most common and comprehensive type. He distinguishes, according to his lights, between the great and small and his sense of the ridiculous meets with general approval. There is finally the *non-humorist*, either devoid of the faculty of laughter or despising it : a pitiable specie, yet capable of extraordinary grandeur, as in the case of seventeenth century puritans. Essential humorists are rare but Shakespeare and Carlyle belong to this class.

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Among the facultative humorists are Dickens. Thackeray, Meredith and Thomas Hardy.

Dealing with his humour, Dowden observes that Shakespeare was endowed with a capacity for a humorous appreciation of the world, human or non-human and that whether a piece of work is a tragedy or a comedy, there is always to be found an incongruity. "The tragic incongruity arises from disproportion between the world and the soul of man ; life is too small to satisfy the soul ; the desires of man are infinite and all possible attainment exists under strictest limitation. The comic incongruity is the reverse of this. It arises from the disproportion between certain souls of men and even this very ordinary world of ours. When a man's wits are so unjointed and so ill-trained that, if put into motion, they forthwith get at cross purposes with themselves, while the happy imbecile remains supremely unconscious of his incapacity, we are in the presence of an example of the comic incongruity." This appears to be a guiding definition of humour. Whether one artist applies it to the whole of his world or to a part of it, is a question outside the purview of our discussion. In regard to Shakespeare, we could say that he did it for the whole of his world.

His world like Hogarth's is a very wide world. But Hogarth's laughters are very common persons. Of them some are very vulgar. One trivival, ludicrous spectacle is the occasion of their mirth. Among them is "a woman with head thrown back to ease the violence of guffaw, all her loose redundant flesh is tickled into an orgasm of merriment.....On the other side sits the spectator who has passed the climax of his laughter, he wipes the tears from his eyes and is on the way to regain an insecure and temporary composure.....Below appears a girl of eighteen or twenty, whose vacancy of intellect is captured and occupied by the innocuous folly still in progress, she gazes on expectantly assured that the new blossom of the wonder of absurdity is about to display itself.....In the right corner sits the humorist, whose eyes, around which the wrinkles gather, are half closed while he already goes over the jest a second time in his imagination.....Finally the thin-lipped, peck-nosed person of refinement looks aside and by his critical indifference condemns the broad injudicious mirth of the company.' Such are the enjoyers of the broad comic in the hands of Hogarth. But, when from such laughter as this, we turn to the laughter of men of genius, who gaze at the total play of the world's life, and we listen to this, as with the ages it goes on gathering and swelling, our senses of hearing is enveloped and almost annihilated by the chorus of mock and jest, of antic buffoonery, of tender mirth and indignant satire, of monstrous burlesque and sly absurdity, of desperate misanthropic derision and genial affection caressing of human imperfection and human folly. We hear from behind the mask of enormous laughter of Aristophanes ascending peal above peal, while it passes into jubilant ecstacy or from the uproar springs some exquisite lyric strain. We hear laughter of passionate indignation from Juvenal. There is then Rabelais with

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his huge buffoonery, and Cervantes with his refined castilian air and deep melancholy mirth.....and Moliere with his laughter of uttering good sense undeluded by fashion or vanity or folly or hypocrisy and brightly mocking these into modesty.....and Voltaire with his quick intellectual scorn and eager malice of the brain and there is the urbane and amiable play of Addison's invention, not capable of large achievement but stirring the corners of the mouth with a humane smile—gracious gaiety for the breakfast tables of England. Again, there is Fielding's careless mastery of the whole broad common field of mirth and there is the tragic laughter of Swift, which announces the extinction of reason and loss beyond recovery of human faith and charity and hope." How in this chorus of laughters, joyous and terrible, is the laughter of Shakespeare distinguishable ?

Shakespeare's is an essentially English humour. His humour is born of a generous sympathy of a strong common sense. He showed the value of comic point of view—the capacity to expose the incongruity, which always lies hidden in men and things or in their relations with each other. Humour is connected chiefly with the people and happenings of everyday life and it is this that Shakespeare reveals in his plays. We see it in its most original form in Sir Toby in *Twelfth Night* and in Falstaff in *Henry IV*. Some of the facts are quite trivial in themselves but become amusing because of the way in which they are told. Take fore instance, Dogberry, the city officer, who is not a very competent person but who considers his position so very important, and maintains it so zealousy. He always utters contradictory maxims and precepts. He is so presumptuous yet so modest. He looks at thing with so correct an eye yet pronounces such foolish judgments. He talks so much and yet says so little, in fact, perpetually contradicts himself, giving orders for what he advises to be left undone, entreating to be registered an ass. He is the chief representative of that view of life upon which the role is based, in as much as its comic power is exhibited most strongly and most directly in him.

If humour can be defined as "the sympathetic appreciation of the comic", *i.e.*, the faculty which enables us to laugh—but to laugh affectionately and sympathetically, than Shakespeare was indeed a great humorist. In his handing of Bottom and his companions, Sir Toby Belch and Sir Andrew Aguecheek and Dogberry and Verges, he makes us appreciate a character even when we laugh at it. Thus his humour is kind. It is not biting. It does not hurt or destroy. In fact, we enjoy his characters and it is because he too enjoys them. Humour is, in a way, the greatest triumph of a creative artist, if it comes pure from a generous heart. No one by taking thought can create humorous characters. That is why the humorists are so few. But among them, Shakespeare is at the top, because it is many-sided and also because it is much more than a laughter-producing power. It is a present and pervading influence throughout his most earnest characters.

To Sum Up. Shakespeare's humour is genial, kindly and tole-

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rant. It is a innate gift—the most vital part of him. It embraced both tragedy and comedy. It abounds in kindly mirth ; there is no element of satire in it but geniality and presentation of truth of a humorous view of life in its vested aspects. His humour is many-sided.

He presents wit and 'pure' comedy in Benedick and Beatrice and 'low' comedy in Dogberry and Verges in *Much Ado About Nothing*. Low comedy is pure clowning which the groundlings liked and enjoyed this English humour and is the most original creation of Shakespeare from the purely artistic point of view. The subject-matter was standing joke with all Elizabethan writers, *viz.*, the colossal stupidity and incompetence of the police. Yet Shakespeare presents them with sympathy and does not regard them with contempt. He laughs with them but not at them. The point of comedy consists in their murder of King's English and the king's law—their conception of public duty. The egoism, pompocity and stupidity of Dogberry and his comrades is limitless. Shakespeare does not introduce this episode as an excrescence but makes it a vital part of the plot. Pure comedy is provided by Benedick and Beatrice—"Shakespeare's living creations of the comic spirit born in a merry hour, sound and happy by nature—a permanent addition to human gaiety." There is fine intelligence and capacity for sharp witty criticism and repartees in both. Ultimately wit succumbs to emotion (instinct) and romance, thus proving that in Shakespeare the comic spirit is only fitful—"It is the complete surrender of wit and the actual resort to instinct which makes Beatrice the instrument of happiness in the crucial movement of the plot of the play."—(Charlton).

14. APPLICATION AND CRITICISM OF THE PLAY

Much Ado About Nothing has two distinct stories with a common theme—the triumph of love over adverse conditions. There are two heroines in this play and both of them get married after much ado. The plot of the play, therefore, is very simple and thin. It differs very much from his early tragedies, *viz.*, *the Comedy of Errors* and *A Mid-Summer Night's Dream*, where Shakespeare shows great ingenuity in handing the plots. But the characterisation is very delicate, vivid but varied. It is alive with thought, what the characters think, not the story, is the play. A number of little events, scarcely recognised as we read, advance the action and call from moment to moment on the intellectual eye to follow them. They are only a background for the characters, as they grow up into firmer and closer reality. Stopford Brook remarks, "If we miss in this play, as some do the involutions of such a plot as we have in *The Merchant of Venice*, we are more than dramatically satisfied by is vivid presentation of human life. Characters of many kinds, each delightfully varied, open hour by hour before us, they move in and out of one another as swiftly, as inter-changingly, as trout in a stream. Their thoughts are quicker than their changes. They are thrilling with youth and gaiety, with their serious passion of love, wrath, envy, indignation, sorrow patience, friendship, audacious hope, excelling joy, even with the passion of death.

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"In a quick succession of scenes, by day, by night, in the castle, in the villa, and the streets of the city, in the masquerade, in the church, we are borne, in vital agitation, along the stream of human life. Not even in the *Twelfth Night* or in *As You Like It* is the livingness of life more living : not even in these Shakespeare's power of creation greater. And Beatrice and Benedick are the quintessence—the centre of this life, but they radiate more of it than either they receive or reflect. Shakespeare has shown great skill n the portrait of the characters of these two—Beatrice and Benedick. Hazlitt remarks and remarks very aptly one point in regard to the presentation of Beatrice and Benedick. He says, "Perhaps that middle point of comedy was never more nicely hit in which the ludicrous blends with the tender and our follies turning round against themselves in support of our affections, retain nothing but their humanity." This part of the play is described as the play of intellect It is made up of the tricks which the intelligence plays with itself in trying to assert an unjustifiable pre-eminence in the human make up. Beatrice and Benedick are intelligent and they always try to show more intelligence, in repressing their emotions. They in fact look for opportune time to have as a wit combat with each other. Hamilton Malice calls this play, not as a play of character, not a manners, but a drama of wit. "Everything is subordinate and accessory to the flash and counterflash of the minds of Beatrice and Benedick. The gentle Hero, the credulous Claudio, the villainous Don John and the inimitably muddle-headed Dogberry and Verges play their parts in order that the verbal interchange between Beatrice and Benedick may be effectively staged. But no drama of wit, however, brilliantly constructed, can have deep rootage of dilate an imagination ; such a drama must inevitably seem cold and artificial. *Much Ado About Nothing* does not move us because it subordinates the interest of character to the interest of brilliant verbal dexterity. It is the finest product of verbal ingenuity and audacity of Shakespeare's time, a legitimate and brilliant example of a love of paradox, conceit and hair-splitting juggling with words affected by the man of wit and fashion in that time and effectively satirised in *Love's Labour's Lost*.

Hamilton Mabic, while making the above observation, does not seem to have done justice to Shakespeare or to the play itself. To pronounce it a 'cold and artificial' play would rather be wrong. While it is true that the wit in the play is on occasions cheap and exasperating, it is also true that such a cheap wit pervaded the Elizabethan age. And, Shakespeare, while employing this cheap wit could not shake-off the influence of his age. "He surveyed this stuff for his age, certainly not for all time." Then there are occasions where both Beatrice and Benedick give brilliant thoughts and flashes of insight. They are the 'thoughtful laughter' of Meredith. Again, it is a mistake to say that Shakespeare subordinates the interest of character to the interest of brilliant verbal dexterity. The interest in wit and the interest in character go together. In this

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connection two points would seem interesting. Firstly, the language that Beatrice uses in railing at Benedick is full of amorous suggestions. It suggests something deeper. Secondly, when she learns of the proposed marriage between Hero and Claudio, she makes a meaningful expression. "Thus goes every one to the world but I, and I am sun-burnt. I may sit in a corner and cry heigh-ho for a husband"—might appear to have been said in a jest, but there is so much of method in her raillery that one suspects that things are deeper than what they appear to be. This stroke of wit serves a two-fold purpose. It is a brilliant wit by itself and it reveals her character also, at the same time.

Perhaps the most distinctive future of *Much Ado Abut Nothing* is the tragic element. In fact, all Shakespeare's comedies have some tragic scenes and all his tragedies have some comic scenes. It is because Shakespeare has tried to portray what he actually experienced in life. Life, as it is lived, has a mixture of both—good days and bad days. *Much Ado* is no conception to this. While commenting on the comedies of Shakespeare, Prof. Quiller-Couch writes, "All Shakespeare's comedies lie close to sorrow, close at least to heart-ache, sometimes close to heart-break. Even in *The Comedy of Errors*, we have pathos induced upon Plautus who knew it not ; even in *Love's Labour's Lost* the shadow of death overcasts a revel. Portia, like the princess of France, mourns a father in the beginning of a play which sails very closely to tragedy, and only fetches off by cleverness, and so mourns Helena at the beginning of *All's Well That Ends Well*. In *Twelfth Night* Olivia and Viola mourn for brothers. No one can under ordinary definition make comedy of *Measure for Measure*. The half at least of the *Winter's Tale*, labelled a comedy, is purely tragic. So *Much Ado* treads close, all the while upon tragedy. Yet we have never a serious doubt that the issue will be blithe and bonny : and this for good reason. In *Much Ado*, no deceit happens, and no mistake into the secret of which we are not admitted from the first and therefore no exposition to catch us unprepared, no crisis to which we do not come wiser than the persons on the stage."

Prof. Quiller-Couch thinks that since we are admitted into the deceits of the play from the beginning and since nothing in the play is a matter of entire surprise to us, the tragic material of the play actually does not produce the painful impression that tragic material is normally expected to produce. Prof. Quiller-Couch has further quoted from the Edinburgh Review of July, 1840, the following lines. which support his view :

"Before every lie is uttered we know that it is a lie, and we cannot doubt it will be detected. In the story of the treachery practised towards Hero, the incidents are in their external aspects deeply tragic and the characters treat them as such, but we, who are in the secret, know that the whole rests within that sphere where comedy finds its nurture.....Here the catastrophe comes to us after gradual preparation. No sudden convulsion attends it, and no

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softening close is necessary like that which carried us from Shylock's judgment hall to the lady's villa. Here also we have been in that mood of interest slightly excited for the incidents which enable us to watch delight some of the most felicitous of all representations of character, in a type which Shakespeare, again and again fondly returning to it, here developed in its utmost possible perfection."

Despite this tragic element in the play, the play remains a comedy and a romantic comedy. It resolves into pure harmony. Hamilton Mabie also supports this view in the following lines: "The play is perilously full of tragic forces and runs dangerously near the verge of catastrophe, but Shakespeare's grasp of his materials is so firm and his skill so magical that the movement of the comedy, introducing the baser and gayer elements, the gloom of the most hopeless potential tragedy and the gaiety of the most audacious wit, is never for an instant uncertain of wandering, but bears steadfastly on to an issue which gains its deepest interest from the background of villainy and treachery against which it is accomplished. It was a piece of Shakespeare's audacity to fasten upon a plot which in more than one version involved the blackest elements of character and snatch from the peril inherent in his material the most moving elements in a happy ending of the basest plot."

Perhaps the most remarkable peculiarity of *Much Ado About Nothing* is that it is the prose comedy of a poet. The polished prose of Beatrice and Benedick and the humorous prose of Dogberry easily get into our heart and we start amusing with them. How delightful the prose is, both in dialogues and solos, that Beatrice and Benedick utter. Their prose is polished, brilliant, natural and dramatic. It is one of the kind that an actor can deliver on the stage. It is flowing having a natural rubato of conversation. In fact, the use of prose in comedies comes from Lyly, who is Shakespeare's precursor. Lyly prepared a ground for Shakespeare for his use of prose, but Shakespeare surpassed him because the former's prose is too artful, too elaborate and too witty; whereas Shakespeare writes prose for facility, variety and relief.

Out of the whole play of *Much Ado About Nothing*, almost three-fourth of it is in prose, *i.e.*, only one-fourth is in verse.

To Sum Up. This play should rank, in point of dramatic construction and development of character with the best of Shakespeare's works. It has the further distinction that whatever is most valuable in the plot is solely due to his own invention—characters representing 'high' comedy of Beatrice and Benedick, and 'low' comedy of Dogberry and Verges, which latter Shakespeare most certainly copied from real life. There is a bewildering variety of characters through whom the dramatist presents life in a quick succession of scenes most vividly. The war of the sexes through sallies of wit and clever repartees as presented through Beatrice and Benedick will be symbolized throughout all future generations. The blending of the three dramatic elements, *viz.*, the tragedy of Hero,

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the comedy of Beatrice and Benedick and the admirable low comedy of Dogberry and Verges is superb. It is admittedly the most closely knit of the comedies and by far the most sparkling. Apart from a certain awkwardness about the Borachio plot, and a few minor anomalies, peculiar to romantic comedies, there is no technical flow. The picture Shakespeare draws in Benedick and Beatrice of interaction between intellect and emotion is at once one of the most sparkling and one of the most significant achievement in comedy.

15. THE FOLIO VARIANST AND TEXT OF THE PLAY

Shakespeare did not publish his plays as Bernard Shaw, Ibsen of Galsworthy published theirs. His plays were handed down in handwritten manuscripts and on many occasions they were staged from these manuscripts. Where manuscript copies were not available, the 'prompt copies' of the transcript copies were made available.

There has been some controversy upon the question whether the author's original manuscript was used as the prompt copy or whether a transcript was made for the use of the producer. But it should be unwise for us to enter into this controversy, we should take it for granted that the producer or the manager did have a copy of the play—whether a manuscript or a transcript—and it was he who guided the players. A reference to *Midsummer-Night's Dream* proves it. Snug, cast for the lion in Pyramus and Thisby interlude (Act I, Sc. ii) plaintively says : "Have you the lion's part written ? Pray you, if it be, give it me, for I am slow of study." There is another instance also. At the first rehearsal, Flute does not know when to come in or where to stop for Quince, the producer, who had already told him about it, exclaims, "Why, you must not speak that yet : that your answer to Pyramus : you speak all your part at once, cues and all."

What was then handed over to the printers—"players parts" or "manuscript" ? As we see, there is much less possibility of the "players' parts" being given to the printers. For the players would not normally part with their parts. It must have been the manuscript copy of the play or plays that was handed over to the printers.

"There can be little doubt that the printer of 1600 edition had a masked theatre copy of the whole play in manuscript (quite possibly Shakespeare's own original) and set up his pages from that ; and there can be equally little doubt that the printer of 1623 had a masked theatre copy of the 1600 printed edition, and set his pages from that. One interesting variaton of text illustrates this. In Act II, Scene iii, the Quarto of 1600 has the stage direction : "Enter Prince, Leonato, Claudio, Musicke." The Folio of 1623 has this direction : "Enter Prince, Leonato, Claudio and Iacke Wilson"—'Iack Wilson,' evidently being the singer of the song 'Sigh no More, Ladies.' The Folio, it should be noted, follows the Quarto in printing the names of actors instead of characters in Act

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IV, Scene, ii, the two text differ surprisingly little when we consider the interval of twenty-three years in which stage 'business' or 'gags' might easily have become accredited upon the original copy. A possible inference is that the play was not so frequently performed as we might suppose.

The play as we have, is a revised one. There are indications to show that the present text is a second thought. Let us take the first scene. We have Beatrice and Benedick here, not merely known to each other, but quite intimate with each other. They have plainly met many a time. Claudio is a complete stranger to all. Read carefully Leonato's speech beginning :

Leonato : A victory is twice itself when the achiever brings home full number. I find here that Don Pedro hath bestowed much honour on a young Florentine called Claudio.

Messenger : Much deserv'd on his part and equally remembered by Don Pedro. He hath borne himself beyond the promise of his age, doing in the figure of a lamb the feats of a lion : he hath indeed bettered expectation than you must expect of me to tell you how.

Leonato : He hath an uncle here in Messina will be very much glad of it.

Messenger : I have already delivered him letters, and there appears much joy in him, even so much, that joy could not show itself modest enough, without a badge of bitterness.

Leonato : Did he break out into tears ?

Messenger : In great measure.

Leonato : A kind overflow of kidness. There are no face truer than those that are so washed. How much better is to weep at joy than to joy at weeping !

Note further the question of Beatrice to the Messenger in the same scene.

Beatrice :.....Who is his companion now ? He hath every month a new sworn brother.

Messenger : Is 't possible ?

Beatrice : Very easily possible.....But I pray you, who is his companion ? Is there no young squarer now that will make a voyage with him to the devil ?

Messenger : He is most in the company of the right noble, Claudio.

Beatrice :..... God help the noble Claudio !

Is it not clear from the above text that Leonato and Beatrice are asking questions about a person unknown to them ? This only information that Leonato seems to possess about Claudio with him

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is that Claudio has his uncle and that the latter lives in Messina. Besides, the mention of this uncle is not very frequent.

Secondly, when Claudio appears, not a single word is exchanged between him and Leonato. Nor is there any exchange of words between Claudio and Hero, when they meet for the first time. It shows that Claudio does not recognise Hero. But, strangely enough, he asks Benedick, when he is alone with Benedick, if he did not note the daughter of Leonato, as if he had seen her for the first.

Then, later from the text, we learnt that Claudio already knows Hero and that he had fallen in love with her during an earlier stay before the war, but made love take a second place to his duty as a soldier, and that having come back from war he is more in love with her than ever before. In this way, we find a strange inconsistency at the very opening of the play. Beatrice and Benedick already intimate with each other, Claudio a stranger and then Claudio not a stranger—are some of them.

The text of the play, as it has come down to us, is, as we have said, that of the Quarto edition of 1600 in which certain anomalies have been found and on the basis of arguments advanced by Prof. J. Dover Wilson, the theory of an older play has been advanced, as we have seen before under section "Date and Sources of the Play."

To Sum Up, (*1*) *Much Ado About Nothing* was first printed in 1600 in a six-penny Quarto by "V. S. (Valentine Sims) for Andrew Wise and William Aspley." Presumably Sims got it printed from the manuscript of the theatrical prompt book, from the theatre manager. The reason for this presumption is the appearance of the names of the original actors of the parts of Dogberry and Verges (Kempe and Cowley) in Act IV, Sc. ii. From this Prof. Dover Wilson concludes "with practical certainty," that this copy was in Shakespeare's own handwriting of the play. Most modern editions are therefore based on this text.

The Quarto is not divided into Acts and its stage directions are inexact and odd. There are however, few misprints and mistakes due to previous experience of Sims in his work. He had already printed *Richard II*, *Richard III*. The faults are due presumably to the copy from which Sims printed this Quarto edition. Shakespeare was indifferent, as he wrote his plays for being acted in the theatre (for which he was paid) and not for the benefit of feature generations of readers. He was also indifferent to his posthumous reputation that he did not even think of having an authorised are corrected versions of his plays.

(2) The next edition of the play was in the first Folio of 1623—the most historic of literary productions, containing 36 Plays of Shakespeare in one collection. Its text is based on that of the Quarto. It was published seven years after his death. There are, however, some changes from the Quarto : (a) it provides a better reading in that it has more precise stage-directions ; (b) it is divided into Acts ; (c) but it has many blunders, verbal omissions, transposi-

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tions, substitutions, additions and the loss of alteration of letters. These are all set down by modern editions as errors of the press; (d) there are certain omissions in the text for specific reason, *e.g.*, to respect religious and political sentiments in Act IV, ii. 16, and III. ii. 30-33.

(3) The next edition was in the Second Folio of 1623. It corrected many misprints of the First Folio. This was followed by two other Folio editions—those of 1663-64 and 1685, but their texts are virtually the same as that of the second.

(4) Last of all came the six-volume edition of Shakespeare's plays in 1709. The editor was Nicholas Rowe. He divided the Acts into scenes and added a list of dramatis personae. Most of the modern editors follow Capell in the matter of division into scenes and in the stage-directions.

(5) Let us not go into the *peculiarities and anomalies of the text of the play* (Quarto edition) as handed down to us after the manner of the Cambridge editors, Prof. Dover Wilson in particular (the New Shakespeare Series, Cambridge University Press). From a thorough examination of this text Prof. Dover Wilson has detected: (a) certain irregular stage-directions in the opening scene, as well as in II. i. II. iii. II i. 78; (d) inadequate of careless speech-handings in VI. ii. III, iii; III. v; IV. ii. and V, i; (c) imperfectly deleted passages in IV. i, 152-55, V. i. 106-09; (d) scantly punctuation, etc. On the basis of these anomalies in the present text of the play Prof. Wilson has built up his theory of an earlier and older play by Shakespeare himself. He says that most probably the manuscript from which the Quarto was printed was an old play worked over and recast somewhere towards the end of 1598 or the beginning of 1599, as he was most interested in Benedick and Beatrice, *Much Ado About Nothing* is virtually the comedy of Beatrice and Benedick for which Shakespeare sacrificed everything within the limits of dramatic coherence and plausibility because he was anxious to deal with and present a situation of abiding and universal interest for all ages and time to come. For this task he had to expand the parts of these two characters, curtail and compress some sections (*viz.*, the verse scene of the Hero-Claudio plot, the importance of which was stressed in the original play).

All that we can say about this theory of an older play and its subsequent revision, propounded by Prof. Dover Wilson, is that it is only probably and perhaps plausible. The Arden editor comments that this theory assumes too much, the whole question is debatable and virtually an insoluble problem. It is all guess work. ●

16. THE STAGE HISTORY OF MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

The text of this play, as we have it, is a revised one. There is evidence to say that Shakespeare did revise and recast it, and while doing so, he did cure some of the loose threads hanging round the

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Hero-Claudio story. He also tried to give prominence to the Beatrice-Benedick plot, which meant a corresponding curtailment in the story of Hero and Claudio. In the old text, the chief interest lay in the story of Hero and Claudio, and in the revised one the Beatrice-Benedick plot had the prominence.

The title page of the quarto says that the play had been acted many a time by the Lord Chamberlain's Servants. Both the Quarto and Folio editions preserve the names of Kemp and Cowley, who acted the parts of Dogberry and Verges Dogberry and Verges have been a great attraction to the public especially the groundlings, who liked this kind of 'low' comedy or clowning. Equal appreciation was given to the Beatrice-Benedick scenes also. This is proved by the following lines prefixed by Leonard Digge to the edition of Shakespeare's poems published in 1640.

".....Let but Beatrice
And Benedick be seen, toe in a trice.
The Cockpit, Gallaries, Boxes are all full."

The play must have shared the fate of others during the Puritan reign for this brilliant comedy would have given mortal offence to Puritan sensibilities and convictions. After the Restoration, the play suffered a serious set-back, and attempts were made "to make over a work of genius to the pattern beloved by an artificial age."

The play revived its appreciation during the eighteenth century. Davies says that Garrick played Benedick's part with such a great skill that the play was widely liked. The role of Beatrice was so successfully played by Mrs. Pritchard that her acting was in no way inferior to Garrick's. "Every scene between them was a continual struggle for superiority, nor could the spectators determine which was the victor."

In the nineteenth century again the role of Benedick was played by Kemble, Kean and Henry Irving. That of Beatrice was played by Misses Fancit, Ellen Terry and Mrs. Kean. The roles of Dogberry and Verges also received attention in this century.

In the present century also, this play has received admiration and applause. It has been staged quite frequently.

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Much Ado About Nothing

(Text with Paraphrase)

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

DON PEDRO,	*Prince of Arragon.*
DON JOHN,	*his bastard Brother.*
CLAUDIO,	*a young Lord of Florence.*
BENEDICK,	*a young Lord of Padua.*
LEONATO,	*Governor of Messina.*
ANTONIO,	*his Brother.*
BALTHAZAR,	*Servant to Don Pedro.*
CONRADE, BORACHIO,	*Followers of Don John.*
DOGBERRY,	*a Constable.*
VERGES,	*a Headborough.*
FRIAR FRANCIS.	
A SEXTON.	
A BOY.	
HERO,	*Daughter to Leonato.*
BEATRICE,	*Niece to Leonato.*
MARGARET, URSULA,	*Gentlewomen attending on Hero*

Messengers, Watchmen, Attendants, etc.

SCENE—Messina.

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MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

ACT I

SCENE I. *A Garden before* Leonato's *House.*

Enter Leonato, Hero, Beatrice, *and others, with a* Messenger.

Leonato. I learn in this letter that Don Pedro of Arragon comes this night to Messina.

Messenger. He is very near by this ; he was not three leagues off when I left him.

Leonato. How many gentlemen have you lost in this action ?

Messenger. But few of any sort, and none of name.

Leonato. A victory is twice itself when the achiever brings home full number. I find here that Don Pedro hath bestowed much honour on a young Florentine called Claudio.

Messenger. Much deserved on his part and equally re- 10
membered by Don Pedro. He hath borne himself beyond the promise of his age, doing in the figure of a lamb the feats of a lion : he hath indeed better bettred expectation than you must expect of me to tell you how.

Leonato. He hath an uncle here in Messina will be very much glad of it.

Messenger. I have already delivered him letters, and there appears much joy in him ; even so much that joy could not show itself modest enough without a badge of bitterness.

Leonato. Did he break out into tears ? 20

Messenger. In great measure.

Leonato. A kind overflow of kindness. There are no faces truer than those that are so washed. How much better is it to weep at joy than to joy at weeping !

Beatrice. I pray you, is Signior Mountanto returned from the wars or no ?

Messenger. I know none of that name, lady : there was none such in the army of any sort.

Leonato. What is he that you ask for, niece ?

Hero. My cousin means Signior Benedick of Padua. 30

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PARAPHRASE

ACT I

SCENE I. *Before* Leonato's *House.*

Enter Leonato, Hero, Beatrice, *and others, with a* Messenger.

Leonato. I learn from this letter that Don Pedro of Arragon is coming tonight to Messina.

Messenger. He is very near by now ; he was not even three leagues away when I left him.

Leonato. How many gentlemen have you lost in this fight ?

Messenger. Only a few of any rank and none of distinction.

Leonato. A victory is twice itself when the victor returns without having lost any of his men : I find here (in this letter) that Don Pedro has honoured a young Florentine, named Claudio.

Messenger. The honour is much deserved by him and has been also acknowledged by Don Pedro. He has shown more valour than it could be expected of his age. He appears as a lamb in figure but he has done the valiant deed of a lion. He has indeed surpassed all expectations more than I am able to tell you.

Leonato. He has an uncle here in Messina, who will be very much glad to learn about it.

Messenger. I have already delivered letters to his uncle and there appears much joy in him. His Joy is so much that it could not express itself moderately without a sign of sorrow.

Leonato. Did he break out into tears ?

Messenger. In a great measure.

Leonato. A natural overflow of tender feelings. There are no faces truer than those that are so washed with tears. How much better it is to weep at the fulness of joy than to be happy when there is reason for weeping.

Beatrice. I pray you, has Signior Mountanto returned from war or not.

Messenger. I know none of that name, lady. There was no such man of any rank in the army.

Leonato. Who is he that you ask for, my niece ?

Hero. My cousin means Signior Benedick of Padua.

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Messenger. O ! he's returned and as pleasant as ever he was.

Beatrice. He set up his bills here in Messina and challenged Cupid at the fight ; and my uncle's fool, reading the challenge subscribed for Cupid, and challenged him at the bird-bolt. I pray you, how many hath he killed and eaten in these wars ? But how many hath he killed ? for indeed I promised to eat all of his killing.

Leonato. Faith, niece, you tax Signior Benedick too much ; but he 'll be meet with you, I doubt it not.

Messenger. He hath done good service, lady, in these wars. 40

Beatrice. You had musty victual, and he hath help to eat it : he is a very valiant trencher-man ; he hath an excellent stomach.

Messenger. And good soldier too, lady.

Beatrice. And a good soldier to a lady ; but what is he to a lord ?

Messenger. A lord to a lord, a man to a man ; stuffed with all honourable virtues.

Beatrice. It is so, indeed ; he is no less than a stufied man ; but for the stuffing.—well, we are all mortal. 50

Leonato. You must not, sir, mistake my niece. There is a kind of merry war betwixt Signior Benedick and her ; they never meet but there's a skirmish of wit between them.

Beatrice. Alas ! he gets nothing by that. In our last conflict four of his five wits went halting off, and now is the whole man governed with one ; so that if he have wit enough to keep himself warm, let him bear it for a defference between himself and his horse ; for it is all the wealth that he hath left to be known a reasonable creature. Who is his companion now ? He hath every month a new sworn brother. 60

Messenger. Is't possible ?

Beatrice. Very easily possible ; he wears his faith but as the fashion of his hat ; it ever changes with the next block.

Messenger. I see, lady, the gentleman is not in your books.

Beatrice. No ; an he where, I would burn my study. But, I pray you, who is his companion ? Is there no young squarer now that will make a voyage with him to the devil ?

Messenger. He is most in the company of the right noble Claudio.

Beatrice. O Lord ! he will hang upon him like a disease : 70 he is sooner caught than the pestilence, and the taker runs presently mad. God help the noble Claudio ! if he have caught the Benedick, it will cost him a thousand pound ere he be cured,

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Messenger. Oh, he has returned and is as merry he ever was.

Beatrice. He threw a challenge here in Messina and challenged Cupid at a long distance shooting ; and my uncle's fool reading the challenge, took up the challenge on behalf of Cupid and challenged him at short-distance shooting. I pray you, how many has he killed and eaten in these wars ? But how many has he killed ? for, indeed, I promised to eat all of his killing.

Leonato. In faith, niece, you accuse Signior Benedick too much, but will he be even with you, I doubt it not.

Messenger. He has done good service, lady, in these wars.

Beatrice. You had stale food and he has helped to eat it ; he is a very valiant eater, he has an excellent appetite.

Messenger. And a good soldier too, lady.

Beatrice. And he may appear a good soldier to a lady. But how does he appear to a lord ?

Messenger. He appears a lord to a lord ; a man to a man. He is filled with all the respectable virtues.

Beatrice. It is so indeed. He is no less than a stuffed man (a man of straw—some commentators hold the meaning of this word as 'Puppet'), but for the stuffing well, we are all mortal.

Leonato. You must not, sir misunderstand my niece ; there is a kind of war of wit between Signior Benedick and her ; they never meet and whenever they happen to meet there is an exchange of wits between them.

Beatrice. Alas ! he gets nothing by that. In our last conflict four of his five wits went limping and he is now left with one wit out of five, so that if he has enough wit to keep himself warm, let him carry it as the only difference between himself and his horse, for that is all the sense he has left to speak of him as rational being. Who is his companion now ? He has every month a new comrade.

Messenger. Is it possible ?

Beatrice. It is easily possible. He has his faith, but he changes it also as readily he changes his hats according to the varying fashions.

Messenger. I see, lady, the gentleman is not in your books, (*i. e.*, you do not favour him).

Beatrice. No, if he were, I would put fire to my library. But I pray you, who is his companion ? Is there no young quarreller now, who will join him to the devil ?

Messenger. He is mostly in the company of the very noble Claudio.

Beatrice. O Lord ! he will hang (cling) upon him like a disease. He is quicker in his effect than the plague itself and the taker (one who is influenced by him) instantly turns mad. God help the noble Claudio ! If he is infected by Benedick, it will cost him one thousand pound before he is cured.

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Messenger. I will hold friends with you, lady.

Beatrice. Do, good friend.

Leonato. You will never run mad, niece.

Beatrice. No, not till a hot January.

Messenger. Don Pedro is approached.

Enter Don Pedro, Don John, Claudio, Benedick, Balthazar, *and others*.

Don Pedro. Good Signior Leonato, you are come to meet your trouble ; the fashion of the world is to avoid cost, and you encounter it. 80

Leonato. Never came trouble to my house in the likeness of your grace : for trouble being gone, comfort should remain ; but when you depart from me, sorrow abides and happiness takes his leave.

Don Pedro. You embrace your charge too willingly. I think this is your daughter.

Leonato. Her mother hath many times told me so.

Benedick. Were you in doubt, sir, that you asked her ?

Leonato. Signior Benedick, no ; for then were you a child.

Don Pedro. You have it full, Benedick : we may guess by this what you are, being a man. Truly, the lady fathers herself. Be happy, lady, for you are like an honourable father. 90

Benedick. If Signior Leonato be her father, she would not have his head on her shoulders for all Messina, as like him as she is.

Beatrice. I wonder that you will still be talking, Signior Benedick ; nobody marks you.

Benedick. What ! my dear Lady Disdain, are you yet living ? 100

Beatrice. Is it possible disdain should die while she hath such meet food to feed it as Signior Benedick ? Courtesy itself must convert to disdain, if you come in her presence.

Benedick. Then is courtesy a turncoat. But it is certain I am loved of all ladies, only you excepted ; and I would I could find in my heart that I had not a heard hart ; for, truly, I love none.

Beatrice. A dear happiness to woman ; they would else have been troubled with a pernicious suitor. I thank God and my cold blood, I am of your humour for that ; I had rather hear my dog bark at a crow than a man swear he loves me. 110

Benedick. God keep your ladyship still in that mind ; so some gentlemen or other shall 'scape a predestinate scratched face.

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Messenger. I would like to be your friend, lady.

Beatrice. Do so, good friend.

Leonato. You will never run mad, niece.

Beatrice. No, not till a hot January.

Messenger. Don Pedro has come.

Enter Don Pedro, Don John, Claudio, Benedick, Balthazar, *and others.*

Don Pedro. Good Signior Leonato, have you come to meet your trouble ? It is the way of the world to avoid cost but you come to meet it.

Leonato. There never came trouble to my house in your coming to me, for when it is gone, comfort should remain. But when you leave me, sorrow remains and happiness takes leave.

Don Pedro. You embrace your burden very willingly. I think this is your daughter.

Leonato. Her mother has many times told me so.

Benedick. Were you in doubt, sir, that you asked her ?

Leonato. Signior Benedick, no ; for then you were a child.

Don Pedro. You have your answer, Benedick. We may guess but this what you are when you are a man, truly the lady resembles her father. Be happy, lady, for you are like an honourable father.

Benedick. If Signior Leonato be her father, she would not have his head on her shoulders for all Messina, though she closely resembles him.

Beatrice. I wonder that you will still be talking, Signior Benedick ; body listens to you.

Benedick. What, my dear Lady Disdain ! Are you still alive ?

Beatrice. Is it possible that disdain should die while she has such proper food to eat as Signior Benedick ? Courtesy should itself change to disdain if you are present.

Benedick. Then, is courtesy a turncoat. But it is certain that I am loved by all the ladies excepting you only, and I wish I did not find my heart so hard, for I truly love none.

Beatrice. A good luck to women ; they would else have been troubled with a wicked suitor : I thank god and my cold nature, I am of your disposition in that respect, I had rather hear my dog bark at a crow than hear a man swear that he loves me.

Benedick. May God keep your ladyship unchanged in that respect, so some gentleman or other shall escape the scratched face which destiny intends for him.

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Beatrice. Scratching could not make it worse, an 't were such a face as yours were.

Benedick. Well, you are a rare parrot-teacher.

Beatrice. A bird of my tongue is better than a beast of yours. 120

Benedick. I would my horse had the speed of your tongue, and so good a continuer. But keep your way, i' God's name; I have done.

Beatrice. You always end with a jade's trick : I know you of old.

Don Pedro. This is the sum of all, Leonato. Signior Claudio, and Signior Benedick, my dear friend Leonato hath invited you all. I tell him we shall stay here at the least a month, and he heartily prays some occasion may detain us longer ; I dare swear he is no hypocrite, but prays from his 130 heart.

Leonato. If you swear, my lord, you shall not be forsworn. [*To* Don John.] Let me bid you welcome, my lord : being reconciled to the prince your brother, I owe you all duty.

Don John. I thank you : I am not of many words, but I thank you.

Leonato. Please it your grace lead on ?

Don Pedro. Your hand, Leonato ; we will go together.

[*Exeunt all but* Benedick *and* Claudio.

Claudio. Benedick, didst thou note the daughter of Signior Leonato ? 140

Benedick. I noted her not ; but I looked on her.

Claudio. Is she not a modest young lady ?

Benedick. Do you question me, as an honest man should do, for my simple true judgment ; or would you have me speak after my custom, as being a professed tyrant to their sex.

Claudio. No ; I pray thee speak in sober judgment.

Benedick. Why, i' faith, methinks she 's too low for a high praise, too brown for a fair praise, and too little for a great praise : only this commendation I can afford her, that were she other than she is, she were unhandsome ; and being no other 150 but as she is, I do not like her.

Claudio. Thou thinkest I am in sport : I pray thee tell me truly how thou likest her.

Benedick. Would you buy her, that you inquire after her ?

Claudio. Can the world buy such a jewel ?

Benedick. Yea, and a case to put it into. But speak you this with a sad brow, or do you play the flouting Jack, to tell us Cupid is a good hare-finder, and Vulcan a rare carpenter ? Come, in what key shall a man take you, to go in the song ? 160

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Beatrice. Scratching would make no difference to a face as it were yours.

Benedick. Well, you are a rare parrot-teacher.

Beatrice. A bird of my tongue is better than a beast of yours.

Benedick. I wish that my horse had the speed of your tongue and had as much the staying power to continue. Continue in god's name, I have finished.

Beatrice. You always end with a jade's trick. I know you of old (*i.e.*, from before).

Don Pedro. This is the sum total of all : Leonato, my dear friend Leonato, has invited you all, Signior Claudio and Signior Benedick. I have told him that we shall stay here for at least a month and he heartily prays that some occassion may be there to prolong our stay. I dare say that he is not a hypocrite and wishes so from his heart.

Leonato. If you swear (that I am sincere), my lord, you shall not have sworn falsely. [*To* Don John] Let me offer you welcome, my lord : since you have reconciled to the prince your brother, it is my duty to be at your service.

Don John. I thank you : I use but few words, but I thank you.

Leonato. Will it please your grace to lead on ?

Don Pedro. Your hand, Leonato ; we shall go together.

[*Exeunt all except* Benedick *and* Claudio.

Claudio. Benedick, did you note (observe) the daughter of Signior Leonato ?

Benedick. I did not note her, but looked at her.

Claudio. Is she not a modest young lady ?

Benedick. Do you ask me, as an honest man should do, for my honest opinion ? or, would you have me speak according to my habit, as being a confirmed hater of the female sex.

Claudio. No, I pray you speak according to your honest opinion.

Benedick. Why, in faith (indeed). I think that she is too low (short-statured) to be praised as tall, too dark in complexion to be praised as fair, and too small in size to be greatly praised. I can only give her this commendation (praise) that if she differed from what she is, she would be unhandsome, and since she is what she is, I do not like her.

Claudio. You think that I am speaking in jest. I pray you tell me truly how you like her ?

Benedick. Will you buy her, that you enquire after her ?

Claudio. Can the world buy such a jewel ?

Benedick. Yes, and a case as well to put it into, but do you speak this with a sad brow ? or do you play the flouting Jack to tell us that blind Cupid is a good hare-finder, and that Vulcan, the worker in metals, is a skilled carpenter ? Come, in what mood shall I take you to be to give you a proper answer.

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Claudio. In mine eye she is the sweetest lady that ever I looked on.

Benedick. I can see yet without spectacles and I see no such matter : there's her cousin, an she were not possessed with a fury, exceeds her as much in beauty, as the first of May doth the last of December. But I hope you have no intent to turn husband, have you ?

Claudio. I would scarce trust myself, though I had sworn the contrary, if Hero would be my wife.

Benedick. Is 't come to this ? In faith, hath not the world one man but will wear his cap with suspicion ? Shall I never see a bachelor of threescore again ? Go to, i' faith ; an thou wilt needs thrust thy neck into a yoke, wear the print of it, and sigh away Sundays. Look ! Don Pedro is returned to seek you. 170

Re-enter Don Pedro.

Don Pedro. What secret hath held you here, that you followed not to Leonato's ?

Benedick. I would your grace would constrain me to tell.

Don Pedro. I charge thee on thy allegiance.

Benedick. You hear, Count Claudio : I can be secret as a dumb man : I would have you think so ; but on my allegiance, mark you this, on my allegiance. He is in love, With who ? now that is your grace's part. Mark how short his answer is : with Hero, Leonato's short daughter. 180

Claudio. If this were so, so were it uttered.

Benedick. Like the old tale, my lord ; 'it is not so, nor 't was not so ; but, indeed, God forbid it should be so.'

Claudio. If my passion change not shortly, God forbid it should be otherwise.

Don Pedro. Amen, if you love her ; for the lady is very well worthy. 190

Claudio. You speak this to fetch me in, my lord.

Don Pedro. By my troth, I speak my thought.

Claudio. And in faith, my lord, I spoke mine.

Benedick. And by my two faiths and troths, my lord, I spoke mine.

Claudio. That I love her, I feel.

Don Pedro. That she is worthy, I know.

Benedick. That I neither feel how she should be loved nor know how she should be worthy, is the opinion that fire cannot melt out of me : I will die in it at the stake. 200

Don Pedro. Thou wast ever an obstinate heretic in the despite of beauty.

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Claudio. In my eye she is the sweetest lady whom I ever looked on.

Benedick. I can see yet without spectacles and I see no such thing : there is her cousin, who, if not possessed of an evil spirit, excels her in beauty, as the first of May does in the last day of December. But I hope you have no intention to act as her husband, have you ?

Claudio. I would hardly trust myself whether I shall be able to keep my promise in not marrying, if Hero would be my wife.

Benedick. Is it come to this ? Indeed, is not there one man in the world who would avoid the risk of marrying ? Shall I never see a bachelor of sixty years again ? Indeed, if you need you can put your neck into yoke (bondage), wear the mark of it, and make sighs on Sundays. Look ! Don Pedro has returned to seek you.

Re-enter Don Pedro.

Don Pedro. What secret has held you here that you did not follow us to Leonato's house.

Benedick. I wish that your grace would compel me to tell.

Don Pedro. I charge you on your loyalty to me.

Benedick. You hear, Count Claudio, I can be silent as a dumb man. I would have you think so, but mark this that I have been compelled to disclose this on my loyalty to Don Pedro. He is in love. With whom ? now that is for your grace to ask. Mark how short his answer is—"with Hero, Leonato's short-statured daughter."

Claudio If this were true, so was it disclosed.

Benedick. Like the old tale, my lord, "it is not so, nor was it so ; but indeed, God forbid, it should be so."

Claudio. If my passion (love) does not change shortly, God forbid, it should be otherwise, (*i.e.*, he should deny his love).

Don Pedro. So be it, if you love her ; for the lady is worthy of your love.

Claudio. You speak so to make me confess, my lord.

Don Pedro. By my faith, I speak as I think.

Claudio. And, in faith, my lord, spoke as I thought.

Benedick. And, by my two faiths and truths, my lord, spoke as I thought.

Claudio. That I love her, I feel.

Don Pedro. That she is worthy, I know.

Benedick. That I neither know how she is to be loved nor how she deserves to be worthy, is my opinion that even fire cannot melt out of me. I will be willing to die in it (in this faith of mine) at the stake.

Don Pedro. You were always an obstinate heretic in the despite of fair sex.

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Claudio. And never could maintain his part but in the force of his will.

Benedick. That a woman conceived me, I thank her ; that she brought me up, I likewise give her most humble thanks : but that I will have a recheat winded in my forehead, or hang my bugle in an invisible baldrick, all women shall pardon me. Because I will not do them the wrong to mistrust any, I will do 210 myself the right to trust none ; and the fine is, for which I may go the finer, I will live a bachelor.

Don Pedro. I shall see thee, ere I die, look pale with love.

Benedick. With anger, with sickness, or with hunger, my lord, not with love : prove that ever I lose more blood with love than I will get again with drinking, pick out mine eyes with a ballad-maker's pen, and hang me up at the door of a brothel-house for the sign of blind Cupid.

Don Pedro. Well if ever thou dost fall from this faith, thou wilt prove a notable argument. 220

Benedick. If I do, hang me in a bottle like a cat and shoot at me ; and he that hits me, let him be clapped on the shoulder, and called Adam.

Don Pedro. Well, as time shall try :
'In time the savage bull doth bear the yoke.'

Benedick. The savage bull may ; but if ever the sensible Benedick bear it, pluck off the bull's horns and set them in my forehead ; and let me be vilely painted, and in such great letters as they write 'Here is good horse to hire,' let them signify under my sign 'Here you my see Benedick the married man.' 230

Claudio. If this should ever happen, thou would'st be hornmad.

Don Pedro. Nay, if Cupid have not spent all his quiver in Venice, thou wilt quake for this shortly.

Benedick. I look for an earthquake too, then.

Don Pedro. Well, you will temporize with the hours. In the meantime, good Signior Benedick, repair to Leonato's : commend me to him and tell him I will not fail him at supper ; for indeed he hath made great preparation.

Benedick. I have almost matter enough in me for such an 240 embassage ; and so I commit you—

Claudio. To the tuition of God : from house, if I had it,—

Don Pedro. The sixth of July : your loving, fried Benedick.

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Claudio. And could never justify his attitude except by wilful obstinacy.

Benedick. I thank that woman who have given me birth, I also give her my most humble thanks for she has brought me up, but all women shall pardon me if I do not marry any of them and wear cuckold's horns on my forehead and hang my bugle in an invisible baldrick. I will do no wrong to mistrust them and I will do the right to trust none ; and the fine (conclusion) is (for the which I may wear finer dress) that I shall remain a bachelor.

Don Pedro. I shall see you, before I die, look pale with love.

Benedick. I may look pale with anger, with sickness, or with hunger, my lord, not with love. If it ever happens that I lose more blood with love, than I will recover with drinking, pluck out my eyes with a ballad-maker's pen and hang me up at the door of a brothel-house as a sign of blind Cupid.

Don Pedro. If ever you should change this faith, you will prove an excellent subject for discussion.

Benedick. If I do, hang me in a wicker basket like a cat and shoot at me, and one who hits me be clapped on the shoulder and called Adam (as the first man in archery).

Don Pedro. Well, it will be time which shall prove it, in due course, the savage bull is made to bear the yoke.

Benedick. The savage bull may, but it ever the sensible Benedick wears it, pluck off the bull's horns and set them in my forehead, and let me be vilely painted and such great letters be written as "Here is good horse to hire." Let them then signify on the placard, attached to me, "Here you may see Benedick, the married man.

Claudio. If this should ever happen, you would be mad like a horned beast.

Don Pedro. No, If Cupid has not spent all his quiver (arrows) in Venice, you will have to tremble for this (*i.e.*, for defying Cupid) soon.

Benedick. I look for an earthquake too then.

Don Pedro. Well, you will be tamed by the time. In the meantime, good Signior Benedick, go Leonato's house, convey my regards to him and tell him that I will not fail to present myself at supper for, indeed, he has made great preparations for it.

Benedick. I have almost matter (sense) enough in me for such an embassy and so I commit you.

Claudio. To the protection of God : from my house if I had one.

Don Pedro. The sixth of July : your loving friend, Benedick.

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Benedick. Nay, mock not, mock not. The body of your discourse is sometime guarded with fragments, and the guards are but slightly basted on neither : ere you flout old ends any further, examine your conscience : and so I leave you. [*Exit.*

Claudio. My liege, your highness now may do me good. 250

Don Pedro. My love is thine to teach : teach it but how,
And thou shalt see how apt it is to learn
And hard lesson that may do thee good.

Claudio. Hath Leonato any son, my Lord ?

Don Pedro. No child but Hero ; she's his only heir,
Dost thou affect her, Claudio ?

Claudio. O ! my lord ;
When you went onward on this ended action,
I look'd upon her with a soldier's eye,
That liked, but had a rougher task in hand
Than to drive liking to the name of love ; 260
But now I am return'd and that war-thoughts
Have left their places vacant, in their rooms
Come thronging soft and delicate desires,
All prompting me how fair young Hero is,
Saying, I liked her ere I went to wars.

Don Pedro. Thou wilt be like a lover presently,
And tire the hearer with a book of words.
If thou dost love fair Hero, cherish it,
And I will break with her, and with her father,
And thou shalt have her. Was 't not to this end 270
That thou began'st to twist so fine a story ?

Claudio. How sweetly do you minister to love,
That know love's grief by his complexion !
But lest my liking might too sudden seem,
I would have salved it with a longer treatise.

Don Pedro. What need the bridge much broader than the flood ?
The fairest grant is the necessity.
Look, what will serve is fit : 't is once, thou lovest,
And I will fit thee with the remedy.
I know we shall have revelling to-night :
I will assume thy part in some disguise,
And tell fair Hero I am Claudio; 280
And in her bosom I 'll unclasp my heart,
And take her hearing prisoner with the force
And strong encounter of my amorous tale :
Then after to her father will I break ;
And the conclusion is, she shall be thine.
In practice let us put it presently. [*Exeunt.*

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Benedick. Nay, mock not, mock not. The text of your conversation is sometimes guarded with fragment (sayings), and the fragments are only lightly stitched on too : before you quote these old-fashioned scraps (of familiar verses and former letter-endings) further, see whether your own discourse is better in style than these, and so I leave you. [*Exit.*

Claudio. My liege (lord), your highness now may do me a favour.

Don Pedro. My love is at your disposal for instructions ; teach it but how, and you shall see how prompt it is to learn any hard lesson that may do you good.

Claudio. Has Leonato any son, my lord ?

Don Pedro. No child, but Hero. She is his only heir. Do you affect her (love her) Claudio ?

Claudio. Oh ! My lord, when you embarked on his action, which has just ended, I regarded her as a soldier should, who liked her, but had a rougher task on hand than to allow his liking to form into love. But now that I have come back and thoughts of battle no more fill my mind, in their place come soft and delicate thoughts, suggesting to me how beautiful the young Hero is, and telling me how much did I love her before I went to wars.

Don Pedro. You will be like a lover presently and tire the hearer with a book of lover's talk. If you love fair Hero, cherish your love, and I will broach the matter to her and her father, and you shall have her. Was it not to this purpose that you began to fashion such a fine story.

Claudio. How sweelty do you minister to love, you know a lover's pains by his looks ! But lest my love seem too sudden, I would have mitigated it with a long discourse.

Don Pedro. Why should a bridge be much broader than the flood ? The best is that answers the necessity of things. Look what you will and is suitable for you. On the present occasion, you love, and I will supply with the remedy. I know we shall have a revelling tonight. At this revelling (feast and mask), I shall personate you in some disguise and tell fair Hero that I am Claudio, and confide to her the secrets of my heart, and I shall capture her attention by the strength and forcible presentation of my tale of love ; after that I shall open the subject to her father and the result would be that she will be yours. Let us carry out this plan presently. [*Exeunt.*

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SCENE II. *A Room in* Leonato's *House.*

Enter Leonato *and* Antonio, *meeting.*

Leonato. How now, brother ! where is my cousin, your son ?
Hath he provided this music ?

Antonio. He is very busy about it. But brother, I can tell you strange news that you yet dreamt not of.

Leonato. Are they good ?

Antonio. As the event stamps them : but they have a good cover, they show well outward. The prince and Count Claudio, walking in a thick-pleached alley in mine orchard, were thus much overheard by a man of mine : the prince discovered to Claudio that he loved my niece your 10 daughter, and meant to acknowledge it this night in a dance ; and if he found her accordant, he meant to take the present time by the top and instantly break with you of it.

Leonato. Hath the fellow any wit that told you this ?

Antonio. A good sharp fellow : I will send for him ; and question him yourself.

Leonato. No, no ; we will hold it as a dream till it appear itself : but I will acquaint my daughter withal, that she may be the better prepared for an answer, if peradventure this be true : go you and tell her of it. 20

Enter Attendants.

Cousins, you know what you have to do. O ! I cry you mercy, friends ; go you with me and I will use your skill. Good cousin, have a care this busy time. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III. *Another Room in* Leonato's *House.*

Enter Don John *and* Conrade.

Conrade. What the good-year, my Lord ! Why are you thus out of measure sad ?

Don John. There is no measure in the occasion that breeds ; therefore the sadness is without limit.

Conrade. You should hear reason.

Don John. And when I have heard it, what blessing brings it ?

Conrade. If not a present remedy, at least a patient sufferance.

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SCENE II. *A Room* in Leonato's *House.*

Enter Leonato *and* Antonio, *meeting.*

Leonato. What is the matter, brother ? Where is my cousin, your son ? Has he arranged for the music required for the entertainment of the guests ?

Antonio. He is very busy about it. But brother, I can tell you strange news that you could not have imagined.

Leonato. Are they good ?

Antonio. As the events prove them : but they have a good outward appearance. The Prince and Claudio, while walking on a path between thickly interwoven branches, were overheard by a servant of mine of the effect that the prince disclosed to Claudio that he loved my niece, your daughter, and wanted to own it (accept it) tonight in a dance, and if he found her agreeable, he meant to avail himself of the first opportunity and immediately open the subject with you.

Leonato. Has the fellow, that told you this, any sense ?

Antonio. A good intelligent fellow : I will send for him, and you can question him yourself.

Leonato. No, no ; we will regard it as a dream till it is clear enough, but I will acquaint my daughter with it, so that she may be better prepared for an answer, if perchance, this comes to be true. Go you and tell her of it.

Enter Attendants.

Cousins, you know what you have to do : O ! I cry your pardon, friend, come along with me and I will use your skill ; good cousin, attend to the need of the time. [*Exeunt.*

(*N. B.* This whole scene is a clumsy way of making Leonato aware that someone is amorously inclined towards his daughter.)

SCENE III. *Another Room in* Leonato's *House.*

Enter Don John *and* Conrade.

Conrade. What the good-year, my lord ! Why are you thus sad out of measure ?

Don John. There is no measure (moderation) in the occasion that breeds sadness. Therefore the sadness is without limit.

Conrade. You should listen to reason.

Don John. And, when I have listened to it, what blessings does it bring it ?

Conrade. If it does not give immediate cure, it gives you a patient suffering.

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Don John. I wonder that thou, being, as thou sayst thou art, born under Saturn, goest about to apply a moral medicine to a mortifying mischief, I cannot hide what I am : I must be sad when I have cause, and smile at no man's jests ; eat when I have stomach, and wait for no man's leisure ; sleep when I am drowsy, and tend on no man's business ; laugh when I am merry, and claw no man in his humour. 10

Conrade. Yea ; but you must not make the full show of this till you may do it without controlment. You have of late stood out against your brother, and he hath taken you newly into his grace ; where it is impossible you should take true root but by the fair weather that you make yourself : it is needful that you frame the season for your own harvest. 20

Don John. I had rather be a canker in a hedge than a rose in his grace ; and it better fitst my blood to be disdained of all than to fashion a carriage to rob love from any : in this, though I cannot be said to be a flattering honest man, it must not be denied but I am a plain-dealing villain, I am trusted with a muzzle and enfranchis'd with a clog ; therefore I have decreed not to sing in my cage. If I had my mouth. I would bite ; if I had my liberty, I would do my liking : in the meantime, let me be that I am, and seek not to alter me. 30

Conrade. Can you make no use of your discontent ?

Don John. I make all use of it, for I use it only. Who comes here ?

Enter Borachio.

What news, Borachio ?

Borachio. I came yonder from a great supper ; the prince your brother, is royally entertained by Leonato ; and I can give your intelligence of an intended marriage.

Don John. Will it serve for any model to build mischief on ? What is he for a fool that betroths himself to unquietness ? 40

Borachio. Marry, it is your brother's right hand.

Don John. Who ? the most exquisite Claudio ?

Borachio. Even he.

Don John. A proper squire ! And who, and who ? which way looks he ?

Borachio. Marry, on Hero, the daughter and heir of Leonato.

Don John. A very forward March-chick ! How came you to this ?

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Don John. I wonder that you, as you say, you are born under Saturn, try to apply a moral medicine to a deadly trouble. I connot hide what I am. I must be sad when I have cause, and smile at other's jests I eat when I have appetite and wait for no man's convenience. I sleep when I am drowsy and bother about no body. I laugh when I am happy and flatter no man in his humour.

Conrade. Yes, but you must not make the full show of this till you are unable to control it. You have of late stood out against your brother and he has just now taken you into his favour, where it is impossible for you to take roots (prosper) unless you mend your disposition. It is, therefore, necessary that you utilise the opportunity for your own good.

Don John. I had rather be a dog-rose (having no value) in a hedge than be a cultivated rose in its beauty, and it better suits my whim (temper) to be hated by all than to shape my behaviour in order to win the love of anyone. In being so (though, I cannot earn a name of being an honest man), it cannot be denied that I am a plain villain. I am so little trusted that I am like a dog that is muzzled or a horse that hobbled. I have, therefore, decided not to be happy in my cage (captivity). If I had my mouth free I would bite ; if I had my liberty, I would do what I like. In the meantime, let me be what I am and do not try to change me.

Conrade. Can you not make any use of your discontent.

Don John. I make all use of it for I keep it all to myself. Who comes here ?

Enter Borachio.

What news Borachio ?

Borachio. I have just come from a great supper, which is held yonder ; the prince, your brother, has been magnificently entertained by Leonato, and I can give you a news of an intended marriage.

Don John. Will it serve as an occasion to make a mischief ? What kind of a fool is he that betrothes himself to a life of worry ?

Borachio. By Mary, it is your brother's right hand (most trusted man).

Don John. Who ? the most exquisite Claudio.

Borachio. Even he, (yes, the same man.)

Don John. A worthy squire ! and who, and who, in which direction is he looking for a wife ?

Borachio. By Mary, he has fixed his heart on Hero, the daughter and heir of Leonato.

Don John. A very presumptuous youngster ! How did you come to know of this ?

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Borachio. Being entertained for a perfumer, as I was smoking a musty room, comes me the prince and Claudio, hand in hand, in sad conference : I whipt me behind the arras, and there heard it agreed upon that the prince should woo Hero for himself, and having obtained her, give her, to Count Claudio. 50

Don John. Come, come : let us thither ; this may prove food to my displeasure. That young start-up hath all the glory of my overthrow : if I can cross him any way, I bless myself every way. You are both sure, and will assist me ?

Conrade. To the death, my lord.

Don John. Let us to the great supper : their cheer is the greater that I am subdued. Would the cook were of my mind ! Shall we go prove what's to be done ? 60

Borachio. We 'll wait upon your lordship. [*Exeunt.*

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Borachio. Being employed as a perfumer, as I was perfuming with smoke of incense a stuffy room, the prince and Claudio came in a serious conversation with hand in hand. I quickly moved behind the tapestry and there heard it agreed upon that the prince should woo Hero for himself and having obtained her give her to Count Claudio.

Don John. Come, come, let us go there, this may prove food for my discontent, that young up-start has all the glory of my fall : if I can cross him in any manner, I shall be happy. Both of you are reliable, and shall help me ?

Conrade. To the death, my lord.

Don John. Let us go to the great supper : their happiness is all the greater because of my downfall. Would the cook be of my mind (share my thoughts) ! Shall we go and see what we can do ?

Borachio. We will follow your lordship. [*Exeunt.*

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ACT II

SCENE I. *A Hall in* Leonato's *House.*

Enter Leonato, Antonio, Hero, Beatrice, *and others.*

Leonato. Was not Count John here at supper ?

Antonio. I saw him not.

Beatrice. How tartly that gentleman looks ! I never can see him but I am heart-burned an hour after.

Hero. He is of a very melancholy disposition.

Beatrice. He were an excellent man that were made just in the midway between him and Benedick : the one is too like an image, and says nothing ; and the other too like my lady's eldest son, evermore tattling.

Leonato. Then half Signior Benedick's tongue in Count John's mouth, and half Count John's melancholy in Signior Benedick's face,— 10

Beatrice. With a good leg and a good foot, uncle, and money enough in his purse, such a man would win any woman in the world, if a' could get her good will.

Leonato. By my troth, niece, thou wilt never get thee a husband, if thou be so shrewd of they tongue.

Antonio. In faith, she's too curst.

Beatrice. Too curst is more than curst : shall lessen God's sending that way ; for it is said, 'God sends a curst cow short horns ; but to a cow too curst, he sends none. 20

Leonato. So, by being too curst, God will send you no horns ?

Beatrice. Just, if he send me no husband ; for the which blessing I am at him upon my knees every morning and evening. Lord ! I could not endure a husband with a beard on his face : I had rather lie in the woollen.

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ACT II

SCENE I. *A Hall in* Leonato's *House.*

Enter Leonato, Antonio, Hero, Beatrice, *and others.*

Leonato. Was not Count John here at supper ?

Antonio. I saw him not.

Beatrice. How sourly that gentleman looks. Whenever I see him, he makes me heart-burnt (uneasy) after an hour.

Hero. He is of a very melancholy disposition.

Beatrice. He were an excellent man if he were made partly of his own nature and partly of the nature of Benedick. The one is too like a picture and speaks nothing, and the other too like a spoilt child always talking (chattering).

Leonato. Then (it means that) half Signior Benedick's tongue transferred to Count John's mouth, and half Count John's melancholy (sadness) transferred to Signior Benedick's face,—

Beatrice. In addition to, with a good leg and good foot uncle, and money enough in his purse. Such a man would win any woman in the world, if he could get her consent.

Leonato. In truth, niece, you will never get a husband, if you are so shrewd of your tongue.

Antonio. In faith she is too curst.

Beatrice. When you say too curst, you mean I am more than curst. From this advantage, I shall lessen God's gift, because it is said that God sends a curst crow with horns short, but God will send no horns to a too curst cow.

Leonato. So by being too curst, God will send you no horns ?

Beatrice. Just so, if he sends me no husband, for which blessing I am at prayer upon my knees every morning and evening, saying that—Lord, I could not endure a husband with a beard on his face ! I would rather prefer to lie between woollen blankets.

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Leonato. You may light on a husband that hath no beard.

Beatrice. What should I do with him ? dress him in my apparel and make him my waiting-gentle woman ? He that hath a beard is more than a youth ; and he that hath no beard is less than a man ; and he that is more than a youth is not for me ; and he that is less than a man, I am not for him ; therefore I will even take sixpence in earnest of the bear-ward, and lead his apes into hell.

Leonato. Well then, go you into hell ?

Beatrice. No ; but to the gate ; and there will the devil meet me, like an old cuckold, with horns on his head, and say, 'Get you to heaven, Beatrice, get you to heaven ; here's no place for you maids' : so deliver I up my apes, and away to Saint Peter for the heavens ; he shows me where the bachelors sit, and there live we as merry as the day is long.

Antonio. [*To* Hero.] Well, niece, I trust you will be ruled by your father.

Beatrice. Yes, faith ; it is my cousin's duty to make curtsy and say, 'Father, as it please you'. But yet for all that, cousin, let him be a handsome fellow, or else make another curtsy, and say 'Father, as it please me.'

Leonato. Well, niece, I hope to see you one day fitted with a husband.

Beatrice. Not till God make men of some other metal than earth. Would it not grieve a woman to be overmastered with a piece of valiant dust ? to make an account of her life to a cold of wayward marl ? No, uncle, I'll none : Adam's sons are my brethren : and, truly, I hold it a sin to match in my kindred.

Leonato. Daughter, remember what I told you : if the prince do solicit you in that kind, you know your answer.

Beatrice. The fault will be in the music, cousin, if you be not wooed in good time : if the prince be too important, tell him there is measure in every thing, and so dance out the answer. For hear me, Hero : wooing, wedding, and repenting, is as a Scotch jig, a measure, and a cinque-pace : the first suit is hot and hasty, like a Scotch jig, and full as fantastical ; the wedding, mannerly modest, as a measure, full of state and ancientry, and then comes repentance, and with his bad legs, falls into the cinque-pace faster, and faster, till he sink into his grave.

Leonato. Cousin, you apprehend passing shrewdly.

Beatrice. I have a good eye, uncle ; I can see a church by daylight.

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Leonato. You may look for a husband that has no beard.

Beatrice. What should I do with him, dress him in my dress and make him my gentle-woman? He that had a beard is more than a youth and one who has no beard is less than a man, and he that is more than a youth is not for me and he that is less than a man, I am not for him Therefore, I will even take six pence in earnest from the bear keeper and lead his apes into hell.

Leonato. Well then, go you into hell?

Beatrice. No, I go only up to the gate, and there the devil will meet me like an old cuckold with horns on his head, and say, "go to heaven, Beatrice, go to heaven, here is no place for virgins like you." So I shall deliver up my apes and go to Saint Peter up in the heavens. He shows me where the unmarried persons sit and there we live as merrily as the day is long.

Antonio. [*Addressing to* Hero.] Well, niece, I trust you will be guided by your father.

Beatrice. Yes, indeed, it is my cousin's duty to show a courtesy and say, "Father, as it pleases you." But yet for all that *i. e.*, consideration of duty, cousin, let him be a handsome fellow or make another low and say, "Father, as it pleases me."

Leonato. Well, niece, I hope to see you one day fitted with a husband (after your choice).

Beatrice. Not, until God makes men of some other substance than earth (dust). Would it not grieve woman to be controlled by a piece of valiant dust? to give an account of her life to a cold of a wilful and incalculable earth. No, uncle, I will have none. Adam's sons are my breathren and truly I hold it a sin to marry one of my relations.

Leonato. Daughter, remember what I told you. If the prince asks your hand in marriage, you know your answer.

Beatrice. The fault will lie in music, cousin. If you are not wooed in proper time (it means that if she was not wooed as soon as the entertainment begins), and if the prince is too important for that time, you may tell him that there is measure (moderation) in everything and so let the dance suppress the answer. For, hear me, Hero, wooing, wedding and repenting are like a Scotch jig, a measure and a quick dance, the first suit is hot and hasty like a Scotch jig and full as fantastic, the wedding, mannerly and modest as a measure full of pomp and show and old-fashioned. And then married man beings to repent and when his bad legs fall into the repentance, he moves fast towards the grave.

Leonato. Cousin, you see things with mischievous wit.

Beatrice. I have a good eye, uncle. I can see a church by daylight.

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Leonato. The revellers are entering, brother : make good room ! 70

Enter Don Pedro, Claudio, Benedick, Balthazar, Don John, Borachio, Margaret, Ursula, *and maskers with a drum.*

Don Pedro. Lady, will you walk about with your friend ?

Hero. So you walk softly and look sweetly and say nothing, I am yours for the walk ; and especially when I walk away.

Don Pedro. With me in your company ?

Hero. I may say so, when I please.

Don Pedro. And when please you to say so ?

Hero. When I like your favour ; for defend the lute should be like the case ! 80

Don Pedro. My visor is Philemon's roof ; within the house is Jove.

Hero. Why, then, your visor should be thatched.

Don Pedro. Speak low, if you speak love.

[*Takes her aside.*

Balthazar. Well, I would you did like me.

Margaret. So would not I, for your own sake ; for I have many ill qualities.

Balthazar. Which is one ?

Margaret. I say my prayers aloud.

Balthazar. I love you the better : the hearers may cry, Amen. 90

Margaret. God match me with a good dancer !

Balthazar. Amen.

Margaret. And God keep him out of my sight when the dance is done ! Answer, clerk.

Balthazar. No more words : the clerk is answered.

Ursula. I know you well enough : you are Signior Antonio.

Antonio. At a word, I am not.

Ursula. I know you by the waggling of your head.

Antonio. To tell you true, I counterfeit him. 100

Ursula. You could never do him so ill-well, unless you were the very man. Here's his dry hand up and down : you are he, you are he.

Antonio. At a word, I am not.

Ursula. Come, come ; do you think I do not know you by your excellent wit ? Can virtue hide itself ? Go to, mum, you are he ; graces will appear, and there's an end.

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Motiyar Rainawari
SRINAGER-190003
KASHMIR

Leonato. The revellers are entering, brother. Make room for them.

Enter Don Pedro, Claudio, Benedick, Balthazar, Don John, Borachio, Margaret, Ursula, *and maskers with a drum.*

Don Pedro. Lady, will you walk about with your friend ?

Hero. Provided that you walk softly and look sweetly and say nothing. I am ready for the walk and especially when I walk away.

Don Pedro. With me in your company ?

Hero. I am say so when I please.

Don Pedro. And when will it please you to say so ?

Hero. When I like your face, for God forbid that the lute should be like its case. It means that your face should not be as ugly as your mask).

Don Pedro. My mask is just like philemon's roof, which keeps Jove under it.

Hero. Why, then, your mask should be so thatched as philemon's roof is ?

Don Pedro. Speak low if you speak of love. [*Takes her aside.*

Balthazar. Well, I would wish if you liked me.

Margaret. I would not wish so for your own sake, for I have many defects.

Balthazar. Which is one ? (Name atleast one of them).

Margaret. I say my prayers aloud.

Balthazar. I love you the better for it, for the hearers may cry 'Amen'.

Margaret. May God give me a good dancer as my partner for dance.

Balthazar. Amen.

Margaret. And, may God keep him away from my sight when the dance is over ! Answer, clerk.

Balthazar. No more words. The clerk is answered.

Ursula. I know you well enough, you are Signior Antonio.

Antonio. In a word, I am not.

Ursula. I know you by the waggling of your head.

Antonio. To tell you the truth, I only pretend to be.

Ursula. You could never so well act such a bad part, unless you were the same man. Here is exactly the dry hand that he has, you are he, you are the same person.

Antonio. In a word, I am not.

Ursula. Come, come, do you think I do not know you by your excellent wit ? Can virtue hide itself ? Go to, hush, you are he, virtues will reveal themselves and that is the end of the matter.

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Beatrice. Will you not tell me who told you so ?

Benedick. No, you shall pardon me.

Beatrice. Nor will you not tell me who you are ? 110

Benedick. Not now.

Beatrice. That I was disdainful, and that I had my good wit out of the 'Hundred Merry Tales' :—Well, this was Signior Benedick that said so.

Benedick. What's he ?

Beatrice. I am sure you know him well enough.

Benedick. Not I, believe me.

Beatrice. Did he never make you laugh ?

Benedick. I pary you, what is he ?

Beatrice. Why he is the prince's jester : a very dull fool : 120 only his gift is in devising impossible slanders ; none but libertines delight in him ; and the commendation is not in his wit, but in his villainy ; for he both pleases men and angers them, and then they laugh at him and beat him. I am sure he is in the fleet : I would he had boarded me.

Benedick. When I know the gentleman, I'll tell him what you say.

Beatrice. Do, do ; he 'll but break a comparison or two on me ; which peradventure not marked or not laughed at, strikes him into melancholy ; and then there's a partridge 130 wing saved, for the fool will eat no supper that night.

—[*Music within.*

We must follow the leaders.

Benedick. In every good thing.

Beatrice. Nay, if they lead to any ill, I will leave them at the next turning. [*Dance. Then exeunt all but Don John,* Borachio, *and* Claudio.

Don John. Sure my brother is amorous on Hero, and hath withdrawn her father to break with him about it. The ladies follow her and but one visor remains.

Borachio. And that is Claudio : I know him by his bearing.

Don John. Are not you Signior Benedick ? 140

Claudio. You know me well ; I am he.

Don John. Signior, you are very near my brother in his love : he is enamoured on Hero, I pary you dissuade him from her ; she is no equal for his birth : you may do the part of an honest man in it.

Claudio. How know you he loves her ?

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Beatrice. Will you not tell me who told you so ?

Benedick. No, you shall excuse me.

Beatrice. Nor will you tell me who you are.

Benedick. Not now.

Beatrice. That I was scornful and that I borrowed my wit from the Hundred Merry Tales : well, this was Signior Benedick that said so.

Benedick. Who is he ?

Beatrice. I am sure you know him well enough.

Benedick. Not I, believe me.

Beatrice. Did he never make you laugh ?

Benebick. I pray you, please let me know who is he ?

Beatrice. Why, he is the prince's jester, a very dull fool ; his only gift (quality) is to invent impossible slanders : none but licentious men take pleasure in him and the praise that he earns lies not in his wit but in his villainy, for both pleases and angers men (pleases with his slanders of others and angers with his slanders of themselves) and for the pleasure they laugh at him, and for the anger they beat him. I am sure he is in the company and I wish he had addressed me.

Benedick. When I meet the gentleman, I shall tell him of what you say.

Beatrice. Do, do : he will but make a few comparisons about me and if perchance they do not attract attention or provoke laughter, he becomes sad and then there is a partridge wing saved, for the fool will eat no supper that night. [*Music within.*

We must follow the leader of the dance.

Benedick. In every good thing. (It means that we should follow them so long they lead us wisely).

Beatrice. Nay, if they lead us to any ill, I will leave them at the next turning of the way.

[*Dance. Then exeunt all except* Don John, Borachio, *and* Claudio.

Don Jahn. Surely, my borther is in love with Hero, and has called her father aside to open the subject with him. The ladies follow her and leave the hall. Only one masked person remains.

Borachio. And that is Claudio. I know him by his bearing.

Don John. Are you not Signior Benedick ?

Claudio. You know me well. I am he.

Don John. Signior, you are very close to my brother in love (friendship). He is enamoured on Hero. I request you to dissuade him from loving her. She is not equal to him in birth ; you may do the part of an honest man in this regard.

Claudio. How do you know that he loves her.

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Don John. I heard him swear his affection.

Borachio. So did I too ; and he swore he would marry her tonight.

Don John. Come, let us to the banquet. 150

[*Exeunt* Don John *and* Borachio.

Claudio. Thus answer I in name of Benedick.
But hear these ill news with the ears of Claudio.
'T is certain so ; the prince woos for himself.
Friendship is constant in all other things
Save in the office and affairs of love :
Therefore all hearts in love use their own tongues ;
Let every eye negotiate for itself
And trust no agent ; for Beauty is a witch
Against whose charms faith melteth into blood.
This is an accident of hourly proof, 160
Which I mistrusted not. Farewell, therefore, Hero !

Re-enter Benedick.

Benedick. Count Claudio ?

Claudio. Yea, the same.

Benedick. Come, will you go with me ?

Claudio. Wither ?

Benedick. Even to the next willow, about your own business, Count. When fashion will you wear the garland of ? About your neck, like an usurer's chaid ? or under your arm like a lieutenant's scarf ? You must wear it one way, for the prince hath got your Hero. 170

Claudio. I wish him joy of her.

Benedick. Why, that's spoken like an honest drover : so they sell bullocks. But did you think the prince would have served you thus ?

Claudio. I pray you, leave me.

Benedick. Ho ! now you strike like the blind man : 't was the boy that stole your meat, and you 'll beat the post.

Claudio. If it will not be, I'll leave you. [*Exit.*

Benedick. Alas ! poor hurt fowl. Now will he creep into sedges. But that my lady Beatrice should know me, and 180 not know me ! The prince's fool ! Ha ? it may be I go under that title because I am merry. Yea, but so I am apt to do myself wrong ; I am not so reputed : it is the base, though bitter, disposition of Beatrice, that puts the world into her person, and so gives me out. Well, I'll be revenged as I may.

Re-enter Don Pedro.

Don Pedro. Now, Signior, where's the count ? did you see him ?

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Don John. I heard him swear his love for her.

Borachio. So did I too and he swore that he would marry her tonight.

Don John. Come, let us go to the banquet.

[*Exeunt* Don John *and* Borachio.

Claudio. Thus I was answering in the person of Benedick but heard all bad news in the preson of Claudio. It is certain that the prince (Don Pedro) woos for himself. Friendship is constant in all other things excepting in the office and the affairs of love. Therefore, all hearts in love speak their own language. Let everyone, therefore, speak for himself in love and trust no middleman, because beauty is a witch, whose charms melt the faithfulness of friends into passion. This is an incident which proves this and which I cannot mistrust. Farewell, therefore, Hero !

Re-enter Benedick.

Benedick. Count Claudio.

Claudio. Yes, the same.

Benedick. Will you come with me ?

Claudio. Whereto ?

Benedick. Just to the next willow tree and on your own business, Count. (Willow trees are a symbol of disappointment in love). In what way are you going to wear the garland ? Are you going to wear it round your neck like a rich banker's chain or under your arm like a lieutenant's scarf ? You must wear it one way or the other, for the prince has got your Hero.

Claudio. I wish him joy of her.

Benedick. Why, you speak so like in honest driver of cattle when he sells bullocks : but did you ever think that the prince would ever treat you thus.

Claudio. I pray you leave me.

Benedick. Ho ! now you strike like a blind man. It was the boy that stole your meat and you will beat the post.

Claudio. If you do not go. Iwill leave you. [*Exit.*

Benedick. Alas poor hurt fowl ! now he will seek solitude like a wounded bird, who quiety creeps into sedges. But it is strange that Lady Beatrice, who knows me so well, does not know me in my disguise. The prince's fool ! Ha ! It may be I go under that title because I am merry : yes, but perhaps I am doing wrong to myself : I am not so repented in the world : it is the baseness of Beatrice to invent slanders and her bitterness to ascribe them to others. She claims to know what the world knows and so gives me out. Well I shall take such vengeance on her as I can.

Re-enter Don Pedro.

Don Pedro. Now, signior, where is the Count ? Did you see him ?

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Benedick. Troth, my lord, I have played the part of Lady Fame. I found him here as melancholy as a lodge in a warren. I told him, and I think I told him true, that your grace had 190 got the good will of this young lady ; and I offered him my company to a willow-tree, either to make him a garland, as being forsaken, or to bind him up a rod, as being worthy to be whipped.

Don Pedro. To be whipped ! what's his fault ?

Benedick. The flat transgression of a school-boy, who, being overjoyed with finding a bird's nest, shows it his companion, and he steals its.

Don Pedro. Wilt thou make a trust a transgression ? The transgression is in the stealer. 200

Benedick. Yet it had not been amiss the rod had been made, and the garland too ; for the garland he might have worn himself, and the rod he might have bestowed on you, who as I take it, have stolen his birds' nest.

Don Pedro. I will but teach them to sing, and restore them to the owner.

Benedick. If their singing answer you saying, by my faith, you say honestly.

Don Pedro. The Lady Beatrice hath a quarrel to you ; the gentleman that danced with her, told her she is much wronged 210 by you.

Benedick. O ! she misused me past the endurance of a block : an oak but with one green leaf on it would have answered her : my very visor began to assume life and scold with her. She told me, not thinking I had been myself, that I was the prince's jester ; that I was duller than a great thaw ; huddling jest upon jest with such impossible conveyance upon me, that I stood like a man at a mark, with a whole army shooting at me. She speaks poniards, and every word stabs : if her breath were 220 as terrible as her terminations, there were no living near her ; she would infect to the north star. I would not marry her, though she were endowed with all that Adam had left him before he transgressed : she would have made Hercules have turned spit, yea, and have cleft his club to make the fire too. Come, talk not of her ; you shall find her the infernal Ate in good apparel. I would to God some scholar would conjure her, for certainly while she is here, a man may live as quiet in hell as in a sanctuary ; and people sin upon purpose, because they would go thither : so indeed, all disquiet, horror, and perturbation follows her. 230

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Don Pedro. Look ! here she comes.

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Benedick. Truly, my lord, I have played the part of Lady Fame (I gave the news about Hero). I found him here as melancholy as a game keeper's put in a warren. I told him, and I think I told him true, that your grace has the goodwill of this young lady and I offered my company to a willow-tree, either to make him a garland as a symbol of disappointment in love or to make a rod of twigs to indicate that he was worthy to be whipped.

Don Pedro. To be whipped ! what is his fault ?

Benedick. The common fault of a school-boy, who being overjoyed with finding a bird's nest, shows to his companions and he steals it.

Don Pedro. Will you make a truth a voice ? Is it the vice in the stealer ?

Benedick. Yet, it would not have been inappropriate (even according to your argument). If the rod had been made and the garlanding too, for he might have worn the garland himself, and as for the rod, he might have bestowed it upon you, *i.e.*, whipped you with the rod, who would have, as I think, stolen his bird's nest.

Don Pedro. I will teach them to sing and restore them to the owner.

Benedick. If their singing answers your saying (if it happens as you say), you are indeed speaking honestly.

Don Pedro. Lady Beatrice had a quarrel with you. The gentleman who danced with her had told her that you had done a wrong to her.

Benedick. O ! she misused (misrepresented) me beyond the endurance of a block of a wood an oak with but one green leaf on it would have answered her for her misrepresentation ; my very mask began to assume life to scold her. She told me, not knowing my identity that I was the prince's jester and that I was duller than a great thaw, heaping ridicule upon me with such incredible dexterity that I stood like a man set up as a target with a whole army shooting at me : she speaks like daggers whose every word stabs. If her breath was as terrible as her terms then nothing living could live near her because she would infect everything to the farthest bounds of space. I would not marry her though she was endowed with all that which Adam left in the world and though she would have made Hercules turn the spit and even split up his club for firewood ; come, do not talk of her. You shall find her to be the hellish Ate (the goddess of discord) in a good dress, I would pray to God that some scholar would conjure her; for certainly, while she is here, a man may live as quietly in hell as in a sanctuary and people sin on purpose (deliberately), because they would wish to go to hell, where they can expect peace, for all disquiet, horror and uneasiness of mind follow her.

Don Pedro. Look ! here she comes,

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Enter Claudio, Beatrice, Hero, *and* Leonato.

Benedick. Will your grace command me any service to the world's end ? I will go on the slight errand now to the Antipodes, that you can devise to send me on : I will fetch you a tooth picker now from the furthest inch of Asia ; bring you the length of Prester John's foot ; fetch you a hair off the Great Cham's beard ; do you any embassage to the Pigmies, rather than hold three world's conference, with this harpy. You have no employment for me ?

Don Pedro. None, but to desire your god company. 240

Benedick. O God, sir, here's a dish I love not : I cannot endure my Lady Tongue. [*Exit.*

Don Pedro. Come lady, come ; you have lost the heart of Signior Benedick.

Beatrice. Indeed, my lord, he lent it me awhile ; and I gave him use for it, a double heart for his single one ; marry, once before he won it of me with false dice, therefore your grace may well say I have lost it.

Don Pedro. You have put him down, lady, you have put him down. 250

Beatrice. So I would not he should do me, my lord, lest I should prove the mother of fools. I have brought Count Claudio, whom you sent me to seek.

Don Pedro. Why, how now, count, wherefore are you sad ?

Claudio. Not sad, my lord.

Don Pedro. How then ? sick ?

Claudio. Neither, my lord.

Beatrice. This count is neither sad, nor sick, nor merry, nor well ; but civil count, civil as an orange, and something of that jealous complexion. 260

Don Pedro. I' faith, lady, I think your blazon to be true ; though I 'll be sworn, if he be so, his conceit is false. Here, Claudio, I have wooed in thy name, and fair Hero is won ; I have broke with her father, and his good will obtained ; name the day of marriage and God give thee joy !

Leonato. Count, take of me my daughter, and with her me fortunes ; his grace hath made the match, and all grace say Amen to it !

Beatrice. Speak Count, 't is your cue.

Claudio. Silence is the perfectest herald of joy : I were but little happy, if I could say how much. Lady, as you are mine, I am yours ; I give away myself for you and dote upon the exchange. 270

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Enter Claudio, Beatrice, Hero, *and* Leonato.

Benedick. Will your grace command me to do any service in the world's farthest part, (so that I may be very far away from Beatrice), I am prepared to go to the opposite side of the globe on any errand that you can plan to send me on. I will now fetch you a tooth-picker from the farthest end of Asia, bring you the measurement of Prester John's foot, fetch you a hair from the Great Cham's beard, carry from you any message to the Pigmies, rather than having an exchange of words with this terrible woman. Do you have no employment for me ?

Don Pedro. None, but to desire to have your good company.

Benedick. O God, sir, here is a dish I love not, I cannot endure my Lady Tongue. (Lady Tongue is used for Beatrice denoting for characteristic of talking too much). [*Exit.*

Don Pedro. Come lady, come, you have lost the heart of Signor Benedick.

Beatrice. Indeed, my lord, he lent it to me for a short time and I gave him use (interest) for it—a double heart for his single one ; indeed formerly he won it from me with a trick, therefore, your grace may well say I have lost it.

Don Pedro. You have put him down, lady ; you have put him down.

Beatrice. So I would not wish that he should also do me so, my lord, lest I should prove myself as the mother of fools. I have brought Count Claudio whom you sent me to seek.

Don Pedro. Why, what is the matter why are you sad ?

Claudio. Not sad, my lord.

Don Pedro. Why then, are you sick ?

Claudio. Neither, my lord.

Beatrice. The Count is neither sad, nor sick, nor merry, nor well : but is civil—civil as an orange and something of that jealous complexion ('jealous' means yellow. Yellow is associated with jealousy).

Don Pedro. Indeed, Lady, I think that your description is true though I will be ready to swear that if he be so, his notion is false. Here Claudio, I have wooed fair Hero in your name and she has been won. I have opened the matter with her father and obtained his permission, choose the day of marriage, and, may God give you joy.

Leonato. Count, take from me my daughter and with her my fortunes ; his grace (Don Pedro) has arranged the marrige and may the All Grace (God Almighty) may say Amen to it (bless it).

Beatrice. Speak, Count. It is your turn to speak.

Claudio. Silence is the best messenger of joy, *i.e.*, I am very happy. I wish I could speak out how much I am. Lady, you are mine and I am yours. I give myself to you and am very happy on the exchange.

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Beatrice. Speak, cousin ; or, if you cannot, stop his mouth with a kiss, and let not him speak neither.

Don Pedro. In faith, lady you have a merry heart.

Beatrice. Yea, my lord : I thank it, poor fool, it keeps on the windy side of care. My cousin tells him in his ear that he is in her heart.

Claudio. And so she doth, cousin. 280

Beatrice. Good Lord, for alliance ! Thus goes every one to the world but I, and I am sun-burnt. I may sit in a corner and cry heigh-ho for a husband !

Don Pedro. Lady Beatrice, I will get you one.

Beatrice. I would rather have one of your father's getting. Hath your grace ne'er a brother like you ? Your father got excellent husbands, if a maid could come by them.

Don Pedro. Will you have me, lady ?

Beatrice. No, my lord, unless I might have another for working-days : your grace is, too costly to wear every day. But, 290 I beseech your grace, pardon me ; I was born to speak all mirth and no matter.

Don Pedro. Your silence most offends me, and to be merry best becomes you : for, out of question, you were born in a merry hour.

Beatrice. No, sure, my lord, my mother cried ; but then there was a star danced, and under that was I born. Cousins, God give you joy !

Leonato. Niece, will you look to those things I told you of ? 300

Beatrice. I cry you mercy, uncle. By your grace's pardon. [*Exit* Beatrice.

Don Pedro. By my troth, a pleasent-spirited lady.

Leonato. There's little of the melancholy element in her, my lord ; she is never sad but when she sleeps ; and not ever sad then, for I have heard my daughter say, she hath often dreamt of unhappiness and waked herself with laughing.

Don Pedro. She cannot endure to hear tell of a husband.

Leonato. O ! by no means ; she mocks all her wooers out of suit.

Don Pedro. She were an excellent wife for Benedick. 310

Leonato. O Lord ! my lord, if they were but a week married, they would talk themselves mad.

Don Pedro. Count Claudio, when mean you to go to church ?

Claudio. Tomorrow, my lord. Time goes on crutches till love have all his rites.

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Beatrice. Speak cousin, or, if you cannot speak, stop his mouth with a kiss and let him also not speak.

Don Pedro. Indeen, lady, you have a merry heart.

Beatrice. Yes, my lord ! I thank it, poor thing, it keeps on the side from which the wind comes (so as to be able to escape from it readily). My cousin tells him in his ear that he is in her heart.

Claudio. And, so she does, cousin.

Beatrice. Good Lord, here is one new kinsman for me by marriage alliance ! Thus everyone gets married in the world excepting myself, and I am tanned with the sun, (that is I am unattractive). I may sit in a corner and cry 'heigh-ho for a husband'.

Don Pedro. Lady Beatrice, I will get you one.

Beatrice. I would rather have one of your father's begetting. Has, your grace no brother like you ? Your father begot sons who would be excellent husbands, if a maid could get one of them.

Don Pedro. Will you have me lady ?

Beatrice. No, my lord, unless I might have another husband for working days : your grace is too costly for everyday wear, but I request your grace to pardon me for my witty remarks. I was indeed born to speak all mirth and nonsense.

Don Pedro. Your silence most offends me and to be merry best suits you for, without doubt, you were born in a merry hour.

Beatrice. Certainly not, my lord, my mother cried, but then there was a star that danced and under that I was born. Cousins, God give you joy !

Leonato. Niece, will you look to those things I told you of.

Beatrice. I beg your pardon, uncle. With your grace's permission. [*Exit* Beatrice.

Don Pedro. In truth, a pleasant-spirited lady.

Leonato. There is little of the melancholy element in her, my lord ! she is never sad except when she sleeps, and not sad even then, for I have heard my daughter say that she has often dreamt of unhappiness and woke up laughing.

Don Pedro. She cannot endure to hear any one speak of a husband for her.

Leonato. Oh, by no means : she mocks all her suitors till they give up their wooing.

Don Pedro. She will be an excellent wife for Benedick.

Leonato. O Lord ! My lord, if they were married but a week, they would drive themselves mad by talking.

Don Pedro. Count, Claudio, when do you intend to go to church (to get married).

Claudio. Tomorrow, my lord. Time appears to go slow (like a lame man walking with crutches) until the marriage rites have been performed.

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Leonato. Not till Monday, my dear son, which is hence a just seven-night ; and a time too brief too, to have all things answer my mind.

Don Pedro. Come, you shake the head at so long a breathing ; but, I warrant thee, Claudio, the time shall not go dully by us, I will in the interim undertake one of Hercules' labours, which is, to bring Signior Benedick and the Lady Beatrice into a mountain of affection, the one with the other. I would fain have it a match ; and I doubt not but to fashion it, if you three will but minister such assistance as I shall give you direction. 320

Leonato. My Lord, I am for you, though it cost me ten nights, watchings.

Claudio. And I, my lord. 330

Don Pedro. And you too, gentle Hero ?

Hero. I will do any modest office, my lord, to help my cousin to a good husband.

Don Pedro. And Benedick is not the unhopefullest husband that I know. Thus far can I praise him ; he is of a noble strain, of approved valour, and confirmed honestly. I will teach you how to humour your cousin, that she shall fall in love with Benedick ; and I, with your two helps, will so practise on Benedick that, in despite of his quick wit and his queasy stomach, he shall fall in love with Beatrice. If we can do this, Cupid is no longer an archer : his glory shall be ours, for we are the only love-gods. Go in with me, and I will tell you my drift. [*Exeunt.* 340

SCENE II. *In* Leonato's *House.*

Enter Don John *and* Borachio.

Don John. It is so ; the Count Claudio shall marry the daughter of Leonato.

Borachio. Yes, my lord, but I can cross it.

Don John. Any bar, any cross, any impediment will be medicinable to me : I am sick in displeasure to him, and whatsoever come athwart his affection, ranges evenly with mine. How canst thou cross this marriage ?

Borachio. Not honestly, my lord, but so convertly that no dishonestly shall appear in me.

Don John. Show me briefly how. 10

Borachio. I think I told your lordship, a year since, how much I am in the favour of Margaret, the waiting-gentle woman to Hero.

Don John. I remember.

Borachio. I can at any unseasonable instant of the night, appoint her to look out at her lady's chamber-window.

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Leonato. Not till Monday, my dear son, which is exactly a week hence and it is a period too short too, to have all things done to my satisfaction.

Don Pedro. Come, you shake the head at so long a delay, but I assure you Claudio that the time shall not unpleasantly be employed by us. I will, in the meantime, undertake one of Hercules' labours, which is to bring Signior Benedick and the Lady Beatrice into a love with each other deeply. I would gladly have it a marriage and I have no doubt of my being to manage it, if you three will render such help as I may demand of you.

Leonato. My lord, I am at your service even if it costs me ten sleepless nights.

Claudio. And I, my lord.

Don Pedro. And you too, gentle Hero?

Hero. I will do my humble duty, my lord, to help my cousin to get a good husband.

Don Pedro. And Benedick is not the most unpromising husband that I know. Thus far can I praise him. He is of a noble descent, of proved valour and well-founded honesty. I will teach you how to humour your cousin so that she may fall in love with Benedick, and I, with the help of you two, will so work or Benedick that despite his quick wit and fastidious taste, he shall fall in love with Beatrice; if we can do this, Cupid is no longer an archer; his glory shall be ours, for we shall have the power which he lacks (the power of inspiring love in Benedick and Beatrice). Come with me and I will tell you the nature of my plan. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II. *In* Leonato's *House.*

Enter Don John *and* Borachio.

Don John. It is true that Count Claudio shall marry the daughter of Leonato.

Borachio. Yes, my lord, but I can thwart it.

Don John. Any hinderance, any obstacle that can stop this marriage will be as beneficial as medicine to me. I cannot like him and whatever comes to baffle his love will please me. How can you stop this marriage?

Borachio Not, honestly, my lord, but so secretly that no body can charge me with dishonesty.

Don John. Show me briefly how.

Borachio I think I told your lordship a year since how much I enjoy the grace of Margaret, the waiting-gentlewoman to hero.

Don John. I remember.

Borachio. I can appoint her to look out at her lady's chamber-window at any unusual time of the night.

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Don John. What life is in that, to be the death of this marriage ?

Borachio. The poison of that lies in you to temper. Go you to the prince your brother ; spare not to tell him that he hath wronged his honour in marrying the renowned Claudio, whose estimation do you mightily hold up, to a contaminated stale, such a one as Hero. 20

Don John. What proof shall I make of that ?

Borachio. Proof enough to misuse the prince, to vex Claudio, to undo Hero, and kill Leonato. Look you for any other issue ?

Don John. Only to despite them, I will endeavour anything.

Borachio. Go then ; find me a meet hour to draw Don Pedro and the Count Claudio alone ; tell them that you know that Hero loves me ; intend a kind of zeal both to the prince and Claudio, as—in love of your brother's honour, who hath made this match, and his friend's reputation, who is thus like to be cozen'd with the semblance of a maid—that you have discovered thus. They will scarcely believe this without trial ; offer them instances, which shall bear no less likelihood than to see me at her chamber-window, hear me call Margaret Hero, hear Margaret term me Claudio ; and bring them to see this the very night before the intended wedding, for in the meantime, I will so fashion the matter that Hero shall be absent ; and there shall appear such seeming truth of Hero's disloyalty, that jealousy shall be call'd assurance, and all the preparation overthrown. 30 40

Don John. Grow this to what adverse issue it can, I will put in practice. Be cunning in the working this, and thy fee is a thousand ducats.

Borachio. Be you constant in the accusation, and my cunning shall not shame me.

Don John. I will presently go learn their day of marriage.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III. Leonato's *Orchard.*

Enter Benedick.

Benedick. Boy.

Enter a Boy.

Boy. Signior.

Benedick. In my chamber-window lies a book ; bring it hither to me in the orchard.

Boy. I am here already, sir.

Benedick. I know that ; but I would have thee hence, and here again. [*Exit* Boy.

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Don John. What virtue is in that to the cancellation of this marriage ?

Borachio. It remains up to you to fashion it to your mischievous ends. Go to your brother, Prince Pedro, do not spare to tell him that he has wronged his honour in marrying the renowned Claudio, whose good qualities you must strongly praise, to a foul harlot like Hero.

Don John. What proof shall I make of that.

Borachio. Proof enough, to deceive the prince, to vex Claudio, to undo Hero, and to kill Leonato. Do you look for any other result ?

Don John. I will do anything just to spite them.

Borachio. Go then, find a suitable hour to draw Don Pedro and the Count Claudio alone and tell them that you know about Hero's loving me, profess a deep concern both for the prince and Claudio and also show that you have found out this out of love for the honour of your brother, who has arranged this marriage and also for the reputation of his friend, who is thus likely to be cheated into marrying a seeming maid. They will hardly believe it without investigation. Offer them such instances as shall bear all likelihood. They can see me at her chamber-window and hear me call Margaret Hero and also hear Margaret call me Claudio, and thus provide them with this proof on the very night before the intended marriage, for in the meantime, I will so fashion the matter that Hero shall be absent and there shall appear such apparent proof of Hero's disloyalty that suspicion shall become certain and all the preparations for the marriage shall be cancelled.

Don John. Let it grow to what adverse issue it can. I will put it in practice. Be cunning in the working of this and thy fee is a thousand ducats.

Borachio. You should be firm in bringing your charge against her and my cunning shall not fail me.

Don John. I will immediately go and find out the day of their marriage. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III. *In* Leonato's *Orchard.*

Enter Benedick.

Benedick. Boy.

Enter a Boy.

Boy. Signior.

Benedick. In my chamber-window lies a book, bring it here to me in the orchard.

Boy. I am here already, sir.

Benedick. I know that, but I want you to go away and come back here again. [*Exit* Boy.

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I do much wonder, that one man seeing how much another man is a fool, when he dedicates his behaviours to love, will after he hath laughed at such shallow follies in others, become 10 the argument of his own scorn by falling in love ; and such a man is Claudio, I have known when there was no music with him but the drum and the fife ; and now had he rather hear the tabor and the pipe. I have known when he would have walked ten miles afoot, to see a good armour ; and now will he lie ten nights awake, carving the fashion of a new doublet. He was wont to speak plain and to the purpose, like a honest man and a soldier ; and now is he turned orthography : his words are a very fantastical banquet, just so many strange dishes. May I be so converted, and see with these eyes ? I cannot tell ; I 20 think not : I will not be sworn but love may transform me to an oyster ; but I'll take my oath on it, till he have made an oyster of me, he shall never make me such a fool. One woman is fair, yet I am well ; another is wise, yet I am well ; another virtuous, yet I am well ; but till all graces be in one woman, one woman shall not come in my grace. Rich she shall be, that's certain ; wise, or I'll done ; virtuous, or I'll never cheapen her ; fair, or I'll never look on her ; mild, or come not near me ; noble, or not I for an angel ; of good discourse, an excellent musician, and her hair shall be of what colour it 30 please God. Ha ! the Prince and Monsieur Love ! I will hide me in the arbour.

[*Hides.*

Enter Don Pedro, Leonato, *and* Claudio, *followed by* Balthazar *and* Musicians.

Don Pedro. Come shall we hear this music ?

Claudio. Yes my good lord. How still the evening is,
As hush'd on purpose to grace harmony !

Don Pedro. See you where Benedick hath hid himself ?

Claudio. O ! very well, my lord ; the music ended.
We'll fit the kid-fox with a penny-worth.

Don Pedro. Come Balthazar, we 'll hear that song again.

Balthazar. O ! good my lord, tax not so bad a voice 40
To slander music any more than once.

Don Pedro. It is the witness still of excellency,
To put a strange face on his own perfection.
I pray thee, sing, and let me woo no more.

Balthazar. Because you talk of wooing, I will sing ;
Since many a wooer doth commence his suit
To her he thinks not worthy ; yet he woos,
Yet will he swear he loves.

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I much wonder that a man, after seeing how much another man makes a fool of himself, when he dedicates his actions to love, will, after he has laughed at such silliness and follied in others become the object of his own scorn by falling in love ; and such a man is Claudio. I have known the time when he delighted only in the music of drum and the fife (the martial music) and now he prefers to hear the music of the tabor and the pipe (music appropriate to love and dance) ; I have known the time when he would have gone ten miles on foot to see a good piece of armour and he will lie ten nights awake carving the fashion of a new jacket. He was accustomed to speak plainly and to the point like an honest man and a soldier, and now he has turned a pedantic in speech ; his words are a fantastic feast of strange remarks. It is quite possible that I may also undergo a similar change and see things with the lover's eyes. I cannot say so with certainty but I think it will happen. I will not swear that love may not change me into an oyster, but I am prepared to take an oath that until love turns me into an oyster, it shall never make me such a fool. One woman is fair, yet I am sound of heart ; another is wise yet I am unaffected ; another virtuous yet I am well ; but till all the good qualities are found in one sigle woman, no woman shall come into my favour. Rich she shall be, that is certain; wise, or I will have nothing to do with her ; virtuous, or I will never make an offer for her ; fair, or I will never look on her ; mild or she is not acceptable to me ; noble, or I will not have her even if she is an angel ; otherwise she should be of good conversations ; she should be an excellent musician ; and her hair should have natural colour. Ha ! the prince Monsieur Love ! I will hide myself in the arbour. [*He hides.*

Enter Don Pedro, Leonato *and* Claudio, *followed by* Balthazar *and* Musicians.

Don Pedro. Come, shall we hear this music ?

Claudio. Yes, my good lord. How still the evening is, as though silent for the purpose of making music charming.

Don Pedro. Do you see where Benedick has hidden himself ?

Claudio. Yes, my good lord : when the music is over, we shall give the young fellow that is due to him, *i.e.*, pay our attention to him.

Don Pedro. Come, Balthazar, we will hear that song again.

Balthazar. O my good lord, tax not so bad a voice to discredit the song once more.

Don Pedro. It is the mark of excellence to put a strange face (pretend ignorance) on his own perfection, I pray you to sing and let me not woo you any more on this score.

Balthazar. Because you talk of wooing, I will sing since many a lover do begin his love to a lady swearing that he loves her though he does not consider her worthy of her love.

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Don Pedro. Now, pray thee come :
Or, if thou wilt hold longer argument,
Do it in notes.

Balthazar. Note this before my notes ; 50
There's not a note of mine that's worth the noting.

Don Pedro. Why, these are very crochets that he speaks ;
Note, notes, forsooth, and nothing ! [*Music.*

Benedick. Now, divine air ! now is his soul ravished ! Is it not strange that sheeps' guts should hale souls out of men's bodies ? Well, a horn for my money, when all's done.

[Balthazar *sings.*

Sigh no more ladies, sigh no more,
Man were deceivers ever,
One foot in sea, and one on shore,
To one thing constant never, 60
Then sigh not so,
But let them go,
And be you blithe and bonny,
Converting all your sounds of woe,
Into hey nonny, nonny.
Sing no more ditties, sing no more,
Of dumps so dull and heavy :
The fraud of men was ever so,
Since summer first was leavy.
Then sigh not so, &c., &c. 70

Don Pedro. By my troth, a good song.

Balthazar. And an ill singer, my lord.

Don Pedro. Ha, no no faith ; thou singst well enough for a shift.

Benedick. An he had been a dog that should have howled thus, they would have hanged him ; and I pray God his bad voice bode no mischief. I had as lief have heard the night-raven, come what plague could have come after it.

Don Pedro. Yea, marry ; dost thou hear, Balthazar ? I pray thee, get us some excellent music : for tomorrow night we 80 would have it at the lady Hero's chamber-window.

Balthazar. The best I can, my lord.

Don Pedro. Do so farewell.

[*Exit* Balthazar and Musicians.

come hither, Leonato : what was it you told me of to-day, that your niece Beatrice was in love with Signior Benedick ?

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Don Pedro. No, I pray you to come with your music, or if you continue to argue, you may do so in music.

Balthazar. Note this before listening to my notes (notes of music), there is not a musical note of mine worthy of note or listening to.

Don Padro. Why, these are mere quibbles that he speaks notes, indeed and nothing. [*Music begins*.

Benedick. Now divine melody ! Now is his soul delighted. Is it not strange that the sheep-guts (strings of the musical instrument) should be able to drag forcefully souls out of men's bodies ? Well, a horn may be mine when everything is over. [Balthazar *Sings*.

Sigh no more ladies, sigh no more,
Men were ever deceivers.
They were never constant for their one foot
Rested in sea and one on the shore.
Then sigh not so but let them go and
Be you cheerful and bright, laughing
Away all you sorrows.
Sing no more songs to be dull and heavy
With melancholy. Man's fraud has ever been
So since the summer was first leafy
(Since the beginning of time)
Therefore sigh no more, (Lines 62 to 65 repeated).

Don Pedro. By my faith, a good song.

Balthazar. And a bad singer, my lord.

Don Pedro. Ha, no, no, indeed, you sing well enough for a makeshift.

Benedick. If he had been a dog that should have howled in this matter, they would have hanged him, and I pray to God that his bad voice (though it is very much like the howling of a dog) forbodes no evils. I would have gladly heard the night-raven, no matter what misfortune might have followed it.

Don Pedro. Yes, indeed, do you hear Balthazar ? I pray you to get us some excellent music, for tomorrow night we wish to have it at the Lady Hero's chamber-window.

Balthazar. The best I can, my lord.

Don Pedro. Do so, farewell. [*Exit* Balthazar *and* Musicians. [*To* Leonato.] Come hither Leonato. What was it that you told me of today, that your niece Beatrice was in love with Signior Benedick ?

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Claudio. O ! ay, Stalk on, stalk on ; the fowl sits. I did never think that lady would have loved any man.

Leonato. No, nor I neither ; but most wonderful, that she should so dote on Signior Benedick, whom she hath in all outward behaviours seemed ever to abhor. 90

Benedick. Is 't possible ? sits the wind in that corner ?

Leonato. By my troth, my lord, I cannot tell what to think of it but that she loves him with an enraged affection ; it is past the infinite of thought.

Don Pedro. May be she doth, but counterfeit.

Claudio. Faith, like enough.

Leonato. O God ! counterfeit ? there was never—counterfeit of passion came so near the life of passion as she discovers it.

Don Pedro. Why, what effects of passion shows she ? 100

Claudio. Bait the hook well : this fish will bite.

Leonato. What effects, my lord ? She will sit you, you heard my daughter tell you how.

Claudio. She did indeed.

Don Pedro. How, how, I pray you ? you amaze me : I would have thought her spirit had been invincible against all assaults of affection.

Leonato. I would have sworn it had, my lord ; especially against Benedick.

Benedick. I should think this a gull, but that the white- 110 bearded fellow speaks it ; knavery cannot, sure, hide himself in such reverence.

Claudio. He hath ta' en th' infection ; hold it up.

Don Pedro. Hath she made her affection known to Benedick.

Leonato. No ; and swears she never will : that's her torment.

Claudio. 'T is true indeed ; so your daughter says : 'Shall I,' says she, 'that have so oft encountered him with scorn, write to him that I love him ?' 120

Leonato. This says she now when she is beginning to write to him ; for she 'll be up twenty times a night, and there will she sit in her smock till she have write a sheet of paper :my daughter tells us all.

Claudio. Now you talk of a sheet of paper, I remember a pretty jest your daughter told us of.

Leonato. O ! when she had writ it, and was reading it over, she found Benedick and Beatrice between the sheet.

Claudio. That.

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Claudio. O, yes, go on stealthily, go on. The bird is at rest. I never thought that lady would have loved any man.

Leonato. No, nor I either, but is not wonderful that she should be so enamoured of Signior Benedick whom she has always apparently professed to hate in her behaviour.

Benedick. Is it possible ? Does the wind sit in that corner ? (Is that the state of affairs ?)

Leonato. By my truth, my lord, I cannot tell what to think of it except that she loves him with a violent passion. It is beyond the definite reach of thought.

Don Pedro. May be that she merely pretends.

Claudio. Indeed, it is likely enough.

Leonato. O God, pretend ! that was never pretence of love that approached so closely to real love as that which she reveals.

Don Pedro. Why, what signs of love does she show ?

Claudio. Let a good bait be used, this fish will bite. (Fish refers to Benedick).

Leonato. What effects, my lord ? she will sit so long (writing letters to Benedick), you heard my daughter tell you how.

Claudio. She did, indeed.

Don Pedro. How, how ? I pray you, you amaze me : I would have thought that she was proof against all attacks of love.

Leonato. I should have sworn that she was, my lord, especially against Benedick.

Benedick. I should think it to be a trick, but for the fact that the white-bearded fellow speaks it, knavery could not surely hide itself in the aspect of a reverence.

Claudio. He has taken the infection of love, keep it up.

Don Pedro. Has she made her affection (love) known to Benedick.

Leonato. No, and she swears she never will, that makes her suffer so much.

Claudio. It is true, indeed, as your daughter says : "Shall I," says she (Beatrice), "who has so often met him with scorn, write to him that I love him."

Leonato. She says this now when she is beginning to write to him, for she will get up twenty times at night and will sit in her night-gown till she has written a sheet of paper. My daughter tells all this.

Claudio. Now that you talk of a sheet of paper, I remember a fine jest your daughter told us.

Leonato. O, when she had written it and was reading it over, she found Benedick and Beatrice between the sheets.

Claudio. That (that was the jest).

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Leonato. O ! she tore the letter into a thousand halfpence ; railed at herself, that she should be so immodest to write to one that she knew would flout her : 'I measure him' says she 'by my own spirit ; for I should flout him, if he writ to me ; yea, though I love him, I should.' 130

Claudio. Then down upon her knees she falls, weeps, sobs, beats her heart, tears her hair, prays, curses ; 'O sweet Benedick. God give me patience !'

Leonato. She doth indeed ; my daughter says ; and the ecstasy hath so much overborne her, that my daughter is sometime afeared she will do a desperate outrage to herself. It is very true. 140

Don Pedro. It were good that Benedick knew of it by some other, if she will not discover it.

Claudio. To what end ? he would but make a sport of it and torment the poor lady worse.

Don Pedro. An he should, it were an alms to hang him. She's an excellent sweet lady, and, out of all suspicion she is virtuous.

Claudio. And she is exceeding wise.

Don Pedro. In every thing but in loving Benedick. 150

Leonato. O ! my lord, wisdom and blood combating in so tender a body, we have ten proofs to one that blood hath the victory. I am sorry for her as I have just cause, being her uncle and her guardian.

Don Pedro. I would she had bestowed this dotage on me ; I would have daffed all other respects and made her half myself. I pray you, tell Benedick of it, and hear what a' will say.

Leonato. Were it good, think you ?

Claudio. Hero thinks surely she will die ; for she says she will die if he love her not, and she will die ere she make her love known, and she will die if he woo her, rather than she will bate one breath of her accustomed crossness. 160

Don Pedro. She doth well : if she should make tender of her love, 't is very possible he' ll scorn it ; for the man, as you know all, hath a contemptible spirit.

Claudio. He is a very proper man.

Don Pedro. He hath indeed a good outward happiness.

Claudio. Before God ! and in my mind, very wise.

Don Pedro. He doth indeed show some sparks that are like wit. 170

Leonato. And I take him to be valiant.

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Leonato. O ! she tore the letter into a thousand pieces, cursed herself that she should be so immodest to write to one that she knows should scoff at her : "I regard him," says she, "by my own spirit for I should flout him (mock at him) if he wrote to me ; yes, though I love him, I should.

Claudio. Then, she falls down upon her knees, weeps, sobs, beats her heart, tears her hair, prays, curses, 'O, Sweet Benedick ! God give me patience.'

Leonato. She does indeed, my daughter says so, and the love has so much overwhelmed her that my daughter is sometimes afraid that she will do some violence to herself in her desperate mood. It is very true.

Don Pedro. It would be better if Benedick knew of it by some other person, if she will not disclose it.

Claudio. Of what use would that be ? He would make it but a jest of it and torment the poor lady worse.

Don Pedro. If he should do so, it would be a good deed to hang him : she is an excellent sweet lady, and undoubtedly she is virtuous.

Claudio. And, she is exceedingly wise.

Don Pedro. In everything except in loving Benedick.

Leonato. Oh ! my lord, when reason and passion combat in woman's tender body, we have enough proof for conviction that passion gains the victory : I am sorry for her as I have just cause to be so, being her uncle and her guardian.

Don Pedro. I wish that she had bestowed this passionate love on me. I would have daffed (set aside) all other considerations and made her my better half. I request you to tell Benedick of it, and know what he has to say.

Leonato. Will it be wise to say so ?

Claudio. Hero thinks that she will surely die, for she says that she will die if he does not love her before she makes her love known : and if he woos her, she will die rather than relax the least of her customary rudeness of speech.

Don Pedro. She would do well if she should make offer of her love. It is quite likely that he will scorn it, for the man, as you all know, is full of scorn.

Claudio. He is a very handsome man.

Don Pedro. He has, indeed, a good appearance.

Claudio. Before God, I declare that I think him to be very wise.

Don Pedro. He does indeed seem to possess some flashes of wit.

Leonato. And, I consider him to be valiant.

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Don Pedro. As Hector, I assure you : and in the managing of quarrels you may say he is wise ; for either he avoids them with great discretion, or undertakes them with a most Christian-like fear.

Leonato. If he do fear God, a' must necessarily keep peace : if he break the peace, he ought to enter into a quarrel with fear and trembling.

Don Pedro. And so will he do ; for the man doth fear 180
God, howsoever it seems not in him, by some large jests he will make. Well, I am sorry for your niece. Shall we go seek Benedick, and tell him of her love ?

Claudio. Never tell him, my lord : let her wear it out with good counsel.

Leonato. Nay, that 's impossible : she may wear her heart out first.

Don Pedro. Well, we hear further of it by your daughter : let it cool the while. I love Benedick well, and I could wish he would modestly examine himself, to see how much he 190
is unworthy so good a lady.

Leonato. My lord, will you walk ? Dinner is ready.

Claudio. If he do not dote on her upon this, I will never trust my expectation.

Don Pedro. Let there be the same net spread for her ; and that must your daughter and her gentlewoman carry. The sport will be when they hold one an opinion of another's dotage, and no such matter : that 's the scene that I would see, which will be merely a dumb-show. Let us send her to call him in to dinner. [*Exeunt* Don Pedro, Claudio *and* Leonato. 200

Benedick. [*Advancing from the arbour.*] This can be no trick ; the conference was sadly borne. They have the truth of this from Hero. They seem to pity the lady : it seems her affections have their full bent. Love me ! why, it must be requited. I hear how I am censured : they say I will bear myself proudly, if I perceive the love come from her ; they say too that she will rather die than give any sign of affection. I did never think to marry : I must not seem proud : happy are they that hear their detractions, and can put them to mending. They say the lady is fair : 't is a truth, I can bear them witness ; and virtuous ; 't is 210
so, I cannot reprove it ; and wise, but for loving me ; by my troth, it is no addition to her wit, nor no argument of her folly, for I will be horribly in love with her. I may chance have some odd quirks and remnants of wit broken on me, because I have railed so long against marriage ; but doth not the appetite alter ? A man loves the meat in his youth that he cannot endure in his age. Shall quips and sentences and these paper bullets of the brain awe a man from the career of his humour ? No ; the world must be peopled. When I said I

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Don Pedro. As Hector, I assure you, and in the matter of quarrels, you may say that he is wise for either he keeps out of them with great prudence or undertakes them with all the sense of seriousness that a Christian displays.

Leonato. If he does fear God, he must necessarily keep peace; if he breaks the peace, he ought to enter into quarrel with fear and trembling.

Don Pedro. And so will he do, for the man does fear God, although it does not so appear in him because he cuts large jokes. Well, I am sorry for your niece. Shall we go and seek Benedick and tell him of her love.

Claudio. Never tell him, my lord, let her get rid of it by better judgment.

Leonato. Nay, that is impossible : she may rather strain her heart to a breaking point.

Don Pedro. Will, we will hear more of it from your daughter. Let it lose its intensity in the meantime. I love Benedick well, and I could wish he would examine himself to see how much he is unworthy of so good a lady.

Leonato. My lord, will you walk ? Dinner is ready.

Claudio. If he does not fall in love with her as a result of this, I will never trust my judgment any more.

Don Pedro. Let the same trap be spread for her ; and your daughter and her maid manage it. The fun will be when each would believe that the other is in love when actually there is no such love. That is the scene I wish to see, but this would be merely a dumb show. (It will be so, for both of them will be too amazed to speak). Let us send her to call him in to dinner.

[*Exeunt* Don Pedro, Claudio *and* Leonato.

Benedick. [*Coming out from the arbour.*] This can be no trick : the conversation was seriously conducted. They have the truth of this from Hero, they seem to pity the lady : it seems her affections have stretched to the utmost. Love me ! Why ? It must be returned. I hear now I am judged : they say that I will behave proudly if I perceive the love coming from her ; they say too, that she will rather die than give any sign of love. I never intended to marry. I must not seem proud. Happy are they who hear their faults mentioned and can rectify them. They say that the lady is fair and it is a truth—I can testify to that : and they say that she is virtuous—it is so I cannot disprove it. They say that she is wise, she may be wise excepting in loving me. In fact, it does no credit to her intelligence nor argues for foolishness for I shall be deeply in love with her. I may perhaps be subjected to the barrage of her sharp wit because I have so long declaimed against marriage. But does not taste the alter ? A man loves meat in his youth and may not endure it in his old age. Shall jests and such harmless shots discharged from the mind awe a man from pursuing the course of his inclination ? No, the world must be populated. When I said I

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would die a bachelor, I did not think I should live till I were 220
married. Here comes Beatrice. By this day ! she's a fair lady:
I do spy some marks of love in her.

Enter Beatrice.

Beatrice. Against my will I am sent to bid you come in to dinner.

Benedick. Fair Beatrice, I thank you for your pains.

Beatrice. I took no more pains for those thanks than you take pains to thank me : if it had been painful, I would not have come.

Benedick. You take pleasure then in the message ?

Beatrice. Yes, just so much as you may take upon a 230
knife's point, and choke a daw withal. You have no stomach, signior : fare you well. [*Exit.*

Benedick. Ha ! 'Against my will I am sent bid you come in to dinner ;' there's double meaning in that. 'I took no more pains for those thanks than you took pains to thank me ;' that 's as much as to say, any pains that I take for you is as easy as thanks. If I do not take pity of her, I am a villain ; if I do not love her, I am a Jew. I will go get her picture. [*Exit.*

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Would die a bachelor, I did not think, I should live till I was married. Here comes Beatrice. Surely, she is a fair lady : I do notice some signs of love in her.

Enter Beatrice.

Beatrice. Against my will, I have been sent to request you to come in to dinner.

Benedick. Fair Beatrice, I thank you for your trouble.

Beatrice. I took no more trouble to get these thanks than you take trouble to thank me. If it had been painful to me to come to you, I would have not come.

Benedick. You take pleasure then in bringing the message (to me) ?

Beatrice. Yes, just so much as you may take upon a knife's point to choke a crow with. If you have no appetite for dinner, Signior, fare you well. [*Exit.*

Benedick. Ha ! "Against my will I am sent to bid you come in to dinner"—there is a double meaning in it. "I took no more trouble for those thanks than you take trouble to thank me"—it means that any trouble that I take for you is as easy as saying thanks. If I do not take pity on her, I am a villain. If I do not love her, I am a jew. I will go and get her picture. [*Exit.*

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ACT III

SCENE I. Leonato's *Garden*.

Enter Hero, Margaret *and* Ursula.

Hero. Good Margaret, run thee to the parlour ;
There shalt thou find my cousin Beatrice
Proposing with the prince and Claudio ;
Whisper her ear, and tell her I and Ursula
Walk in the orchard, and our whole discourse
Is all of her ; say that thou overheard'st us,
And bid her steal into the pleached bower,
Where honest-suckles, ripened by the sun,
Forbid the sun to enter ; like favourites,
Made proud by princes, that advance their pride 10
Against that power that bred it. There will she hide her,
To listen our purpose. This is thy office ;
Bear thee well in it and leave us alone.

Margaret. I'll make her come, I warrant you presently.
[*Exit.*

Hero. Now Ursula, when Beatrice doth come,
As we do trace this alley up and down,
Our talk must only be Benedick :
When I do name him, let it be thy part
To praise him more than ever man did merit.
My talk to thee must be how Benedick 20
Is sick in love with Beatrice : of this matter
Is little Cupid's crafty arrow made,
That only wounds by hearsay.

Enter Beatrice, *behind*.

Now begin ;
For look where Beatrice, like a lapwing runs
Close by the ground, to hear our conference.

Ursula. The pleasant'st angling is to see the fish
Cut with her golden oars the silver stream,
And greedily devour the treacherous bait :
So angle we for Beatrice ; who even now
Is couched in the woodbine coverture, 30
Fear you not my part of the dialogue.

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ACT III

SCENE I. Leonato's *Garden.*

Enter Hero, Margaret *and* Ursula.

Hero. Good Margaret, run to the drawing-room. There you will find my cousin, Beatrice, talking with the prince and Claudio, and whisper into her ear and tell her that I and Ursula are walking in the orchard and that our whole conversation is about her ; say that you have overheard us, and ask her to steal herself into the bower, roofed with interwoven branches, where the honey suckles have grown so thick under the ripening influence of the sun that they keep out the sun-light just like favourites who have been promoted by princes and afterwards use their power against the very masters who bred it. There she will hide herself to listen to the purport of our talk. This is your duty, do it properly and leave us alone.

Margaret. I will make her come immediately, I assure you. [*Exit.*

Hero. Now, Ursula, when Beatrice comes, while we walk up and down this pathway, we must talk of Benedick alone. When I mention his name, it should be your duty to praise him more than any man deserved. My talk to you must be how Benedick is sick with love of Beatrice and that of such matter is little Cupid's artful arrow made, that inspires love only through what he hears about love.

Enter Beatrice, *behind.*

Now you may begin. For look, where Beatrice, like a lapwing (a bird), runs close to the ground, to overhear our conversation.

Ursula. There is the great pleasure in angling when the fish is seen cutting her way through the transparent stream and greedily swallowing the treacherous bait that lures her to her death. So are we angling for Beatrice who even now is hidden in the arbour of the woodbine. You need not fear about the part of my dialogue.

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Hero. Then go we near her, that her ear lose nothing
Of the false sweet bait that we lay for it—
No truly, Ursula, she is too disdainful ;
I know her spirits are as coy and wild
As haggards of the rock.

Ursula. But are you sure
That Benedick loves Beatrice so entirely ?

Hero. So says the prince, and my new-trothed lord,

Ursula. And did they bid you tell her of it, madam ?

Hero. They did entreat me to acquaint her of it ; 40
But I persuaded them, if they loved Benedick,
To wish him wrestle with affection,
And never to let Beatrice know of it.

Ursula. Why did you so ? Doth not the gentleman
Deserve as full as fort unate a bed
As ever Beatrice shall couch upon ?

Hero O god of love ! I know he both deserve
As much as may be yielded to a man ;
But Nature never framed a woman's heart
Of prouder stuff than that of Beatrice ; 50
Disdain and scorn ride sparkling in her eyes,
Misprising what they look on, and her wit
Values itself so highly, that to her
All matter else seems weak. She cannot love,
Nor take no shape nor project of affection,
She is so self-endeared.

Ursula. Sure, I think so ;
And therefore certainly it were not good
She knew his love, lest she make sport at it.

Hero. Why, you speak truth. I never yet saw man,
How wise, how noble, young, how rarely featured, 60
But she would spell him backward : if fair-faced,
She would swear the gentleman should be her sister ;
If black, why, Nature, drawing of an antick,
Made a foul blot ; if tall, a lance ill-headed ;
If low, an agate very vilely cut ;
If speaking, why, a vane blown with all winds ;
If silent, why, a block moved with none.
So turns she every man the wrong side out,
And never gives to truth and virtue that
Which simpleness and merit purchaseth. 70

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Hero. Then let us go near her, so that she may overhear every word of our conversation, designed to entrap her.—No, truly Ursula, she is too scornful. I know she is as shy and ungovernable in spirits as the mountain creek haunting hawk.

Ursula. But are you sure that Benedick loves Beatrice so wholeheartedly.

Hero. So says the prince and my lord whom I have just been betrothed.

Ursula. And, did they ask you to tell her of it, madam ?

Hero. They did request me to inform her of it, but, I persuaded them that if they loved Benedick. they should wish him to struggle with his affection and never to let Beatrice know of it.

Ursula. Why did you do so ? Does not the gentleman deserve to share the felicity of union with Beatrice.

Hero. O god of love ! I know he does deserve as much as may fall to the lot of man ; but Nature never fashioned a woman's heart of prouder stuff than that of Beatrice : there is disdain and scorn sparkling in her eyes undervaluing what they look on and she holds her wit in such high regard that all other things seem petty to her, she cannot love, nor can accept any form of affection, she is so much in love with herself.

Ursula. I surely think so. It would certainly not be advisable for her to know his love lest she should scoff at it.

Hero. Why you speak truth, I never yet saw a man, however wise, noble, young and good-looking he might be whom she would not misconstrue (underestimate him in order to ridicule him). If he is fair-faced, she would swear that he was effeminate ; if black—she would say that Nature has made a mistake in creating a buffoon ; if tall, she would say that he was like a lance with an ill-fitting head ; if short, she would say that he was a badly cut miniature in agate (agate is a device cut in a seal or ring) ; if speaking, she would say that he was a weathercock moved by every breeze ; if silent, she would say that he was a wooden block moved by none. So she turns every man towards his wrong side and gives to truth and virtue all that is due to simplicity and merit.

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Ursula. Sure, sure, such carping is not commendable.

Hero. No; not to be so odd and from all fashions
As Beatrice is, cannot be commendable.
But who dare tell her so ? If I should speak,
She would mock me into air : O ! she would laugh me
Out of myself, press me to death with wit.
Therefore let Benedick, like cover'd fire,
Consume away in sighs, waste inwardly :
It were a better death than die with mocks,
Which is as bad as die with tickling. 80

Ursula. Yet tell her of it : hear what she will say.

Hero. No ; rather I will go to Benedick,
And counsel him to fight against his passion.
And, truly, I'll devise some honest slanders
To stain my cousin with. One doth not know
How much an ill word may empoison liking.

Ursula. O ! do not do your cousin such a wrong,
She cannot be so much without true judgment,
Having so swift and excellent a wit
As she is prized to have, as to refuse 90
So rare a gentleman as Signior Benedick.

Hero. He is the only man of Italy,
Always excepted my dear Claudio.

Ursula. I pray you, be not angry with me, madam,
Speaking my fancy : Signior Benedick,
For shape, for bearing, argument and valour,
Goes foremost in report through Italy.

Hero. Indeed, he hath an excellent good name.

Ursula. His excellence did earn it, ere he had it.
When are you married, madam ? 100

Hero. Why, every day, tomorrow. Come, go in :
I 'll show thee some attires, and have thy counsel
Which is the best to furnish me tomorrow.

Ursula. She's limed, I warrant you : we have caught her, madam.

Hero. If it prove so, then loving goes by haps :
Some Cupid kills with arrows, some with traps.

[*Exeunt* Hero *and* Ursula.

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Ursula.. Surely, surely, such fault-finding is not praiseworthy.

Hero. No, not to be so odd and eccentric, as Beatrice is, cannot be praiseworthy. But who would have courage to tell her so. If I were to speak, she would scoff at me, she would make me look foolish with her ridicule and crush me with heavy weight of her wit. It would better, therefore, if Benedick was allowed to wither in sighs and pine away in sorrow, like a smothered fire. It would be better for him to die thus than to die of mockery which is as painful as death from tickling.

Ursula. Yet tell her of it and hear what she will say.

Hero. No, I would rather go to Benedick and advise him to struggle against his passion. And surely, I shall inpute some harmless blemishes to my cousin, which are not really her own. One does not know how much an ill-word may kill love.

Ursula O ! do not do your cousin such a wrong She cannot be so deficient in judgment in refusing love to such a fine gentleman as Benedick. When she has such a ready and excellent wit and for which she is so much praised.

Hero. He is the only man of Italy except my dear Claudio.

Ursula. I request you not to be angry with me, madam, when I speak my thoughts. Signior Benedick is known as a first man throughout Italy for his personal beauty, manners, conversation and valour.

Hero. Indeed, he has an excellent name.

Ursula. His excellence he did have it before his reputation. When are you going to be married, madam ?

Hero. Why ? Everyday beginning from tomorrow. Let us go in. I will show you some dresses and have your advice as to which is the best to dress myself tomorrow.

Ursula. She is caught. I assure you. We have caught her, madam.

Hero. If it proves to be so, then love is an affair of chance. For some are driven into love by the working of Cupid, while others are entrapped into love. [*Exeunt* Hero *and* Ursula.

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Beatrice. [*Coming forward.*] What fire is in mine ears ? Can this be true ?
Stand I condemn'd for pride and scorn so much ?
Contempt, farewell ! and maiden pride, adieu ! 110
No glory lives behind the back of such.
And, Benedick, love on ; I will requite thee,
Taming my wild heart to thy loving hand :
If thou dost love, my kindness shall incite thee
To bind our loves, up in a holy band ;
For others say thou dost deserve, and I
Believe it better than reportingly. [*Exit.*

SCENE II. *A Room in* Leonato's *House.*

Enter Don Pedro, Claudio, Benedick, *and* Leonato.

Don Pedro. I do but stay till your marriage be consumate, and then go I toward Arragon.

Claudio. I 'll bring you thither, my lord, if you 'll vouchsafe me.

Don Pedro. Nay, that would be as great a soil in the new gloss of your marriage, as to show a child his new coat and forbid him to wear it. I will only be bold with Benedick for his company ; for, from the crown of his head to the sole of his foot, he is all mirth : he hath twice or thrice cut Cupid's bow-string, and the little hangman dare not 10 shoot at him. He hath a heart as sound as a bell, and his tongue is the clapper ; for what his heart thinks his tongue speaks.

Benedick. Gallants, I am not as I have been.

Leonato. So say I : methinks you are sadder.

Claudio. I hope he be in love.

Don Pedro. Hang him, truant ! there's no true drop of blood in him, to be truly touched with love If he be sad, he wants money.

Benedick. I have the tooth-ache. 20

Don Pedro. Draw it.

Benedick. Hang it.

Claudio. You must hang it first, and draw it afterwards.

Don Pedro. What ! sigh for the tooth-ache ?

Leonato. Where is but a humour or a worm.

Benedick. Well, every one can master a grief but he that has it.

Claudio. Yet say I, he is in love.

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Beatrice. [*Coming forward.*] What burning sensation is there in my ears ? Can this be true ? Do I stand acused of pride and scorn so much ? contempt—farewell ? and maiden pride, adieu. Such qualities are not praised in the absence of their owner. And Benedick, love on, I will return your love, I shall tame my wild heart to love you, if you love me. My kindness shall encourage you to join our loves in the holy bond of marriage, for others say that you are deserving and I believe it on better evidence than hearsay. [*Exit.*

SCENE II. *A Room* in Leonato's *House.*

Enter Don Pedro, Claudio, Benedick, *and* Leonato.

Don Pedro. I shall be staying till your marriage is performed and thereafter I shall go to Arragon.

Claudio. I will accompany you thither, if you will allow me.

Don Pedro. No, that would be as great a smudge on the fresh lustre of your marriage as to show a child his new coat and keep him from wearing it. I will only take liberty with Benedick for his company because from the top of his head to the sole of his foot, he is full of mirth. He has twice or thrice escaped unhurt from the attacks of Cupid and the little hangman dares not shoot at him. He has a sound heart like a bell and his tongue is like the clapper (striker of the bell) for what his heart thinks, his tongue speaks.

Benedick. Gentlemen, I am not as I have been.

Leonato. So say I, it seems to me that you are more serious.

Claudio. I hope he be in love.

Don Pedro. Hang him, truant, he must be a traitor if he is in love. If he is sad, he wants money.

Benedick. I have the toothache.

Don Pedro. Pull it out.

Benedick. Hang it.

Claudio. You must hang it first and draw it afterwards.

Don Pedro. What ! Why do you sigh for the toothache.

Leonato. Which is but caused by the presence of a worm.

Benedick. Well, everyone can master a grief excepting he, who has it.

Claudio. Yet, I say that he is in love.

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Don Pedro. There is no appearance of fancy in him unless it be a fancy that he hath to strange disguises; as to be a Dutchman today, a Frenchman tomorrow, or in the shape of two countries at once, as a German from the waist downward, all slops, and a Spaniard from the hip upward, no doublet. Unless he have a fancy to this foolery, as it appears he hath, he is no fool for fancy, an you would have it appear he is. 30

Claudio. If he be not in love with some woman, there is no believing old signs: a' brushes his hat o' mornings; what should that bode?

Don Pedro. Hath any man seen him at the barber's? 40

Claudio. No, but the barber's man hath been seen with him, and the old ornament of his cheek hath already stuffed tennis-balls.

Leonato. Indeed, he looks younger than he did, by the loss of a beard.

Don Pedro. Nay, a' rubs himself with civet: can you smell him out by that?

Claudio. That's as much as to say, the sweet youth's in love.

Don Pedro. The greatest note of it is his melancholy.

Claudio. And when was he wont to wash his face? 50

Don Pedro. Yea, or to paint himself? for the which, I hear what they say of him.

Claudio. Nay, but his jesting spirit; which is now crept into a lute-string, and now governed by stops.

Don Pedro. Indeed, that tells a heavy tale for him. Conclude, conclude, he is in love.

Claudio. Nay, but I know who loves him.

Don Pedro. That would I know too: I warrant, one that knows him not.

Claudio. Yes, and his ill conditions; and, in despite of all, dies for him. 60

Don Pedro. She shall be buried with her face upwards.

Benedick. Yet is this no charm for the tooth-ache. Old Signior, walk aside with me: I have studied eight or nine wise words to speak to you, which these hobby-horses must not hear.

[*Exeunt* Benedick *and* Leonato.

Don Pedro. For my life, to break with him about Beatrice.

Claudio. 'T is even so. Hero and Margaret have by this played their parts with Beatrice, and then the two bears will not bite one another when they meet. 70

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Don Pedro. There is no outward appearance of love in him, unless it is a fanciful desire that he has for strange disguises, such as to be a Dutchman today, Frenchman tomorrow, or to combine in himself the fashion in dress of the two countries as being a German from the waist downward covered with baggy trousers and a Spaniard from the hip upward with no jacket unless he has a love for this fantastic dress, as it appears he has. He has none of the foolishness of love as you would assume.

Claudio. If he is not in love with some woman, none can believe the old and familiar signs of love any more. He brushes his hat every morning, what can that signify ?

Don Pedro. Has any man seen him at the barber's ?

Claudio No, but the barber's man has been seen with him and the hair on his face (beard) has already stuffed tennis-balls.

Leonato. Indeed, he looks younger in age than he did, by the loss of beard.

Don Pedro. More than that, he perfumes himself with a perfume extracted from the glands of the civet-cat, can you not make him out by smell ?

Claudio. It means to say that the sweet youth is in love.

Don Pedro. The greatest mark of it is his sadness.

Claudio. And when was he accustomed to apply cosmetics to his face.

Don Pedro. Yes, to paint his face or to paint himself. For the doing of which, I hear, they are commenting on him.

Claudio. Not only that, his jesting spirit has shrunk now into the soft note of love such as is played on a lute.

Don Pedro Indeed, that tells in what a sad plight he is. Let us conclude that he is in love.

Claudio. No, but I know who loves him.

Don Pedro. I would wish to know that too, I am sure that there is one who does not know him.

Claudio. Yes, (for the sake of emphasis), there is one who knows him and knows his ill-conditions (bad qualities), and is ready to die for his sake in spite of all those bad qualities.

Don Pedro. She shall be buried with her face upwards. (The idea of 'dies' for him continues).

Benedick Yes, is this no cure for the tooth-ache. Old Signior walk aside with me. I have learnt eight or nine wise words to speak to you, which these fools must not hear.

[*Exeunt* Benedick *and* Leonato.

Don Pedro. By my life, he takes away Leonato to take him into confidence and open the matter about Beatrice.

Claudio. It is exactly so. Hero and Margaret have by this time played their parts with Beatrice and the two bears (surely persons) will not bite one another, when they meet.

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Enter Don John.

Don John. My lord and brother, God save you !

Don John. Good den, brother.

Don John. If your leisure served, I would speak with you.

Don Pedro In private ?

Don John. If it please you ; yet Count Claudio may hear, for what I would speak of concerns him.

Don Pedro. What's the matter ?

Don John. [*To* Claudio.] Means your lordship to be married tomorrow ?

Don Pedro. You know he does. 80

Don John. I know not that, when he knows what I know.

Claudio. If there be any impediment, I pray you discover it.

Don John. You may think I love you not ; let that appear hereafter, and aim better at me by that I now will manifest. For my brother, I think he holds you will, and in dearness of heart hath holp to effect your ensuing marriage ; surely suit ill spent, and labour ill bestowed !

Don Pedro. Why, what's matter ?

Don John. I came hither to tell you ; and, circumstances shortened, for she has been too long a talking of, the lady is 90 disloyal.

Claudio. Who ? Hero ?

Don John. Even she : Leonato's Hero, your Hero, every man's Hero.

Claudio. Disloyal ?

Don John. The word is too good to point out her wickedness ; I could say she were worse ; think you of a worse title. and I will fit her to it. Wonder not till further warrant : go but with me tonight, you shall see her chamber-window entered, even the night before her wedding-day ; if you love her then, 100 tomorrow wed her ; but it would better fit your honour to change your mind.

Claudio. May this be so ?

Don Pedro. I will not think.

Don John. If you dare not trust that you see, confess not that you know. If you will follow me, I will show you enough ; and when you have seen more and heard more proceed accordingly.

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Enter Don John.

Don John. My lord and brother, God save you.

Don Pedro. Good evening, brother.

Don John. If you have leisure, I wish to speak with you.

Don Pedro. In private ?

Don John. If it pleases you, yet Count Claudio may also hear, because what I would speak of concerns him also.

Don Pedro. What is the matter ?

Don John. [*To Claudio.*] Does your lordship intend to be married tomorrow ?

Don Pedro. You know that he does.

Don John. I cannot be certain of that when he would come to know that I know.

Claudio. If there is any obstacle, I request you to disclose it.

Don John. You may think that I do not love you (I am not your well-wisher) but the future will prove it. You may judge me better by what I will now disclose. I know that my brother, who holds you in high estimation and in intimate love, has a large hand in your coming marriage. But, surely, your time and labour have both been ill-spent on this suit.

Don Pedro. Why, what is the matter ?

Don John. I have come here to tell you that. Avoiding further details, for she has been much talked of, I say that the lady is unfaithful.

Claudio. Who, Hero ?

Don John. Just she : Leonato's Hero, your Hero, everybody's Hero.

Claudio. Disloyal ?

Don John. The word is too mild to express her wickedness adequately, I could say that she was worse. You think of a worse name and I will show that it is situated to her. You must not show any surprise at my news until I give further proof. If you only come with me tonight, you will see her chamber-window entered even the night before her wedding-day. If you love her even then (that is even after seeing that) you may marry her tomorrow. But it would be more fitting to your honour, if you were to change your mind.

Claudio. Can this be so ?

Don Pedro. I will not think it possible.

Don John. If you dare not trust that you see, you should not confess that you know. If you follow me, I will show you enough proof ; and when you have seen it and even heard it, you may proceed as you think.

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Claudio. If I see anything tonight, why I should not marry her tomorrow in the congregation, where I should wed, there will I shame her. 110

Don Pedro. And, as I wooed for thee to obtain her, I will join with thee to disgrace her.

Don John. I will disparage her no further till you are my witnesses : bear it coldly but till midnight, and let the issue show itself.

Don Pedro. O day untowardly turned !

Claudio. O mischief strangely thwarting !

Don John. O plague right well prevented ! So will you say when you have seen the sequel. [*Exeunt.* 120

SCENE III. *A Street.*

Enter Dogberry *and* Verges, *with the* Watch.

Dogberry. Are you good men and true ?

Verges. Yea, or else it were pity but they should suffer salvation, body and soul.

Dogberry. Nay, that were a punishment too good for them, if they should have any allegiance in them, being chosen for the prince's watch.

Verges. Well, give them their charge, neighbour Dogberry.

Dogberry. First, who think you the most desartless man to be constable ?

Watch 1. Hugh Oatcake, sir, or George Seacoal, for they can write and read. 10

Dogberry. Come hither, neighbour Seacoal. God hath blessed you with a good name : to be a well-favoured man is the gift of fortune, but to write and read comes by nature.

Watch 2. Both which, master constable,—

Dogberry. You have : I knew it would be your answer, Well, for your favour, sir, why, give God thanks, and make no boast of it ; and for your writing and reading, let that appear when there is no need of such vanity...You are thought here to be the most senseless and fit man for the constable of the watch ; therefore bear you the lanthorn. This is your charge : you shall comprehend all vagrom men ; you are to bid any man stand, in the prince's name. 20

Watch 2. How if a' will not stand ?

Dogberry. Why, then take no note of him, but let him go ; and presently call the rest of the watch together, and thank God you are rid of a knave.

Verges. If we will not stand when he is bidden, he is none of the prince's subjects. 30

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Claudio. If I see anything tonight to convince me that I should not marry her tomorrow, in the presence of a church assembly. I will disgrace her there instead of marrying her.

Don Pedro. Since I have wooded her for you, I will join you in disgracing her.

Don John. I will not caluminate for any further till you are my witness to her actions. You may have patience till midnight and let the result appear in due course.

Don Pedro. O, the day has turned so bad !

Claudio. What a mischance to cross my love !

Don John. It is well that it has been prevented. So will you say when you have seen that final issue. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III. *A Street.*

Enter Dogberry *and* Verges, *with the* Watch.

Dogberry. Are you good and faithful men ?

Verges. Yes, otherwise it would be a pity if they suffer salvation of body and soul.

Dogberry. No, that would be too good (bad) a punishment for them, if they should have any loyalty in them, for being chosen to be the watchmen of the prince.

Verges. Well, Dogberry, give them their charge.

Dogberry. First (i. e., the first watch), who think you as the most deserved man should be the constable.

Watch 1. Hugh Oatcake, sir, or George Seacoal, for they can write and read.

Dogberry. Come here, neighbour Seacoal. God has blessed you with a good name. To be a good-featured man is the gift of fortune but to write and read is the gift of nature.

Watch 2. Both which, Master constable.

Dogberry. You have : I knew it would be your answer. Well, for your good face, sir, why give thanks to God and make no boast of it. As regards your writing and reading let it be shown when there is more need of making the display. You are considered to be the most sensible and fit man for the post of the constable of the watch : therefore, bear (carry) the lantern—this is your duty. You shall seize all vagrant men and you are to challenge any man in the name of the prince.

Watch 2. What if he will not stand ? (i.e., Does not care to listen to our challenge and does not stop).

Dogberry. Why, then take no notice of him and let him go and immediately call the rest of watchmen together and thank God that the fellow is not there to trouble you any further.

Verges. If he does not stand when he is ordered to, he is none of the prince's subject.

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Dogberry. True, and they are to meddle with none but the prince's subjects. You shall also make no noise in the streets : for, for the watch to babble and talk is most tolerable and not to be endured.

Watch 2. We will rather sleep than talk : we know what belong to a watch.

Dogberry. Why, you speak like an ancient and most quiet watchman, for I cannot see how sleeping should offend ; only have a care that your bills be not stolen. Well, you are to call at all the alehouses, and bid those that are drunk get them to bed. 40

Watch 2. How if they will not ?

Dogberry. Why then, let them alone till they are sober : if they make you not then the better answer, you may say they are not the men you took them for.

Watch 2. Well, sir.

Dogberry. If you meet a thief, you may suspect him, by virtue of your office : to be no true man ; and, for such kind of men, the less you meddle or make with them, why, the more is for your honesty. 50

Watch 2. If we know him to be a thief, shall we not lay hands on him ?

Dogberry. Truly, by your office you may ; but I think they that touch pitch will be defiled. The most peaceable way for you, if you do take a thief, is to let him show himself what he is and steal out of your company.

Verges. You have been always called a merciful man, partner.

Dogberry. Truly, I would not hang a dog by my will, much more a man who hath any honesty in him. 60

Verges. If you hear a child cry in the night, you must call to the nurse and bid her still it.

Watch 2. How if the nurse be asleep and will not hear us ?

Dogberry. Why, then depart in peace and let the child wake her with crying ; for the ewe that will not hear her lamb when it baes, will never answer a calf when he bleats.

Verges. 'T is very true.

Dogberry. This is the end of the charge :—you, constable, are to present the prince's own persons : if you meet the prince in the night, you may stay him. 70

Verges. Nay, by'r lady, that I think a' cannot.

Dogberry. Five shillings to one on 't, with any man that knows the statutes, he may stay him : marry, not without the prince be willing ; for, indeed, the watch ought to offend no man, and it is an offence to stay a man against his will.

Verges. By'r lady, I think it be so.

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Dogberry. Truly, they are to meddle with none excepting the prince's subjects. You shall also make no noise in the street because it is intolerable for the watch to clamour and talk.

Watch 2. We, shall rather sleep than talk. We know the duties of a watch.

Dogberry. Why, you speak like an old and most quiet watchman for I cannot see how any thing can be wrong with sleeping. You have only to take care that your weapons are not stolen. Well your duty is to visit all the ale-houses and ask all such persons to their beds as are drunk.

Watch 2. What if they do not ?

Dogberry. Why, then do not meddle with them till they are sober. If they do not then give you a better answer you may say that they are not the persons you took them for.

Watch 2. Well, sir.

Dogberry. If you meet a thief, you may suspect him because it is your duty. If you find no true men, then it would be better for you not to meddle yourself with such kind of men. And, this is all the better for your honesty.

Watch 2. If we know him to be a thief, shall we not arrest him.

Dogberry. Truly, by virtue of your office, you may, but think that you should avoid the risk of their evil company. The most peaceful way for you, if you arrest a thief, is to let him act as a thief acts and let him steal out of your company.

Verges. You have always been called a merciful man, partner.

Dogberry. Truly, I would not hang a dog willingly, much less a man who has any honesty in him.

Verges. If you hear a child crying in the night, you must call the nurse and ask her to quiet it.

Watch 2. What is to be done if the nurse be asleep and will not listen to us.

Dogberry Then you may go away peacefully and let the crying child wake up the nurse, for the ewe that will not hear her lamb when it cries will never answer a call when it bleats.

Verges. It is very true.

Dogberry. This is all that I have to say. You, as constable, are to represent the prince's own person, if you meet the prince in the night, you may stop him even.

Verges. No, by our lady, I think, he cannot do so.

Dogberry. I will bet five shillings against one with any man who knows the rules that he can stop him, marry not unless the prince is willing, for indeed the watch ought to offend no man, and it is an offence to stop a man against his will.

Verges. By our lady, I think it so.

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Dogberry. Ha, ha, ha ! Well, masters good night : an there be any matter of weight chances, call up me. Keep your fellows' counsels, and your own, and good night. Come neighbour. 80

Watch 2. Well, masters, we hear our charge ; let us go sit hear upon the church-bench till two, and then all to bed.

Dogberry. One word more, honest neighbours. I pray you watch about Signior Leonato's door ; for the wedding being there tomorrow, there is a great coil tonight. Adieu ; be vigitant, I beseech you. [*Exeunt* Dogberry *and* Verges.

Enter Borachio *and* Conrade.

Borachio. What Conrade. !

Watch 2. [*Aside*.] Peace ! stir not.

Borachio. Contrade, I say !

Conrade. Here, man, I am at thy elbow. 90

Borachio. Mass, and my elbow itched, I thought there would a scab follow.

Conrade. I will owe thee an answer for that ; and now forward with thy tale.

Borachio. Stand thee close then under this pent-house, for it drizzles rain, and I will, like a true drunkard, utter all to thee.

Watch 2. [*Aside*.] Some treason, masters ; yet stand close.

Borachio. Therefore know I have earned of Don John a thousand ducats. 100

Conrade. Is it possible that any villainy should be so dear ?

Borachio. Thou should's rather ask if it were possible any villainy should be so rich ; for when rich villains have need of poor ones, poor ones may make what price they will.

Conrade. I wonder at it.

Borachio. That shows thou art unconfirmed. Thou knowest that the fashion of a doublet, or a hat, or a cloak, is nothing to a man. 110

Conrade. Yes, it is apparel.

Borachio. I mean, the fashion.

Conrade. Yes, the fashion is the fashion.

Borachio. Tush ! I may as well say the fool's the fool. But seest thou not what a deformed thief this fashion is ?

Watch 2. [*Aside*.] I know that Deformed, a' has been a vile thief this seven year ; a' goes up and down like a gentleman ; I remember his name,

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Dogberry. Ha, ah, ha ! Well masters, good night ; if any matter of importance happens call me up : keep your fellows' secrets, and your own, and good night : come, neighbour.

Watch 2. Well, masters, we have heard our charge. Let us go and sit there upon the church-bench till two, and then let us all go to our beds.

Dogberry. One word more, honest neighbours, I pray you should watch Signior Leonato's door, for there will take place a wedding tomorrow and there is a great bustle tonight. Adieu, be vigilant, I request you. [*Exeunt* Dogberry *and* Verges.

Enter Borachio *and* Conrade.

Borachio. What, Conrade !

Watch 2. [*Aside.*] Peace, stir not. (Do not move).

Borachio. Conrade, I say.

Conrade. Here, man, I am very close to you.

Borachio. By the mass, there was itching of my elbow. I thought that there would come a scurvy fellow.

Conrade. I will give you my answer later and now come forward with thy tale.

Borachio. You should stand under this shed for it is drizzling and I will, like a true drunkard, tell you all.

Watch 2. [*Aside.*] Some treason, masters, you stand out of the way.

Borachio. Therefore know that I have earned from Don John one thousand ducats.

Conrade. Is it possible that any villainy should have such a price ?

Borachio. You should rather ask if it were possible that any villain should be so rich, for when rich villains should need the services of poor ones, poor ones may demand whatever price they will.

Conrade. I wonder at it.

Borachio. It shows that you are an inexperienced man. You know that the fashion of a doublet, or a hat, or a cloak matters little to a man.

Conrade. Yes, it is only the dress.

Borachio. I mean the fashion.

Conrade. Yes, the fashion is the fashion.

Borachio. Tush ! I may as well say that the fool is the fool : but do you not see wha a deformed thief this fashion is ?

Watch 2. [*Aside.*] I know that Deformed. He has been a yile thief for these seven years. He goes about like a gentleman ; I remember his name.

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Borachio. Didst thou not hear somebody ?

Conrade. No : 't was the vane on the house ? 120

Borachio. Seest thou not, I say, what a deformed thief this fashion is ? how giddily a' turns about all the hot bloods between fourteen and five-and-thirty ? sometimes fashioning them like Pharaoh's soldiers in the reechy painting ; sometime like god Bel's priests in the old church-window ; sometime like the shaven Hercules in the smirched worm-eaten tapestry, where his cod-piece seems as massy as his club ?

Conrade. All this I see, and I see that the fashion wears out more apparel than the man But art not thou thyself giddy with the fashion too, that thou hast shifted out of thy 130 tale into telling me of the fashion ?

Borachio. Not so neither ; but know that I have tonight wooed Margaret, the Lady Hero's gentlewoman, by the name of Hero ; she leans me out at her mistress' chamber-window, bids me a thousand times good night,—I tell this tale vildly :— I should first tell thee how the prince, Claudio, and my master planted, and placed and possessed by my master Don John, saw afar off in the orchard this amiable encounter.

Conrade. And thought they Margaret was Hero ?

Borachio. Two of them did, the prince and Claudio ; but 140 the devil my master knew she was Margaret ; and partly by his oaths, which first possessed them, partly by the dark night, which did deceive them, but chiefly by my villainy, which did confirm and slander that Don John had made, away went Claudio enraged ; swore he would meet her, as he was appointed. Next morning at the temple, and there, before the whole congregation, shame her with what he saw o'er night, and send her home again without a husband.

Watch 1. We charge you in the prince's name, stand !

Watch 2. Call up the right Master constable. We have 150 here recovered the most dangerous piece of lechery that ever was known in the commonwealth.

Watch 1. And one Deformed is one of them : I know him, a' wears a lock.

Conrade. Masters, masters !

Watch 2. You 'll be made bring Deformed forth, I warrant you.

Conrade. Masters,—

Watch 1. Never speak : we charge you let us obey you to go with us. 160

Borachio. We are like to prove a goodly commodity, being taken up of these men's bills.

Conrade. A commodity in question, I warrant you. Come we 'll obey you.

[*Exeunt.*

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Borachio. Did you not hear somebody ?

Conrade. No, it was the weather-cock on the house.

Borachio. Do you not see, I say, what a deformed thief this fashion is ? How it gets hold of and rules blindly all impetuous persons between fourteen and thirty-five, sometimes fashioning them like Pharaoh's soldiers in the smoke-stained painting, sometimes like God Bel's priests in the old church-window, and sometimes like the shaven Hercules in the soiled worm eaten tapestry, where his codpiece seems as massy as his club ?

Conrade. All this I see, and I see that more clothes are discarded because they are out of fashion than because they are worn out ; but are you not infatuated with fashion as you have stopped your tale telling me about fashions.

Borachio. Not so, but you must know that I have tonight wooed Margaret, the Lady Hero's gentlewoman, by the name of Hero. She leaned out at her mistress' chamber-window and bade me a thousand times 'Good-night'. I tell this tale cunningly. I should first tell you how the prince, Claudio, and my master, who had been stationed, and placed and informed by my master, Don John, saw from their distant place in the orchard this loving meeting.

Conrade. And, did they think that Margaret was Hero ?

Borachio. Two of them did, the prince and Claudio, but the devil, my master, knew that she was Margaret. It was partly by the oaths he swore when first he informed them and partly by the dark night, which deceived them, but chiefly because of my villainy, which confirmed the malicious report that Don John had made to them that Claudio went away in anger and swore that he would meet her, as he was engaged to do, next morning and disgrace her in the presence of the whole congregation in the church by shaming her by what he has seen during the night and thus send her home back without a husband.

Watch 1. We charge you in the name of the prince, stand.

Watch 2. Call up the worthy Master constable : we have here discovered that most dangerous piece of treachery that was ever known in the state.

Watch 1. And, one Deformed is one of them, I know him, he wears a love lock.

Conrade. Masters, masters !

Watch 2. You will be made to bring forth Deformed, I insist.

Conrade. Masters,—

Watch 1. Never speak : we charge yo to obey us and to come with us.

Borachio. We are likely to prove a goodly commodity (article of merchandise) being taken up on credit against an acknowledgment of the bonds. (It is a pun on the watchman's bills.)

Conrade. It is a commodity of doubtful value, I can assure you. Come we shall obey you. [*Exeunt.*

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SCENE IV. *A Room in* Leonato's *House.*

Enter Hero, Margaret, *and* Ursula.

Hero. Good Ursula, wake my cousin Beatrice, and desire her to rise.

Ursula. I will, lady.

Hero. And bid her come hither.

Ursula. Well. [*Exit.*

Margaret. Troth, I think your other rabato were better.

Hero. No, pray thee, good Meg, I'll wear this.

Margaret. By my troth's not so good ; and I warrant, your cousin will say so.

Hero. My cousin's a fool, and thou art another : I'll wear none but this. 10

Margaret. I like the new tire within excellently, if the hair were a thought browner ; and your gown's a most rare fashion, i' faith. I saw the Dutchess of Milan's gown that they praise so.

Hero. O ; that exceeds, they say.

Margaret. By my troth's but a night gown in respect of yours : cloth o' gold, and cuts, and laced with silver, set with pearls, down sleeves, side sleeves, and skirts, round underborne with a bluish tinsel ; but for a fine, quaint, graceful, and excellent fashion, yours is worth ten on 't. 20

Hero. God give me joy to wear it ! for my heart is exceeding heavy.

Margaret. 'T will be heavier soon by the weight of a man.

Hero. Fie upon thee ! art not ashamed ?

Margaret. Of what, lady ? of speaking honourably ? Is not marriage honourable in a beggar ? Is not your lord honourable without marriage ? I think you would have me say, 'saving your reverence, a husband' ; an bad thinking do not wrest true speaking. I'll offend nobody. Is there any harm in 'the heavier for a husband ?' None, I think, an it be the right husband and the right wife ; otherwise 't is light, and not heavy : ask my Lady Beatrice else ; here she comes. 30

Enter Beatrice.

Hero. Good morrow, coz.

Beatrice. Good morrow, sweet Hero.

Hero. Why, how now ? do you speak in the sick tune ?

Beatrice. I am out of all other tune, methinks.

Margaret. Clap us into 'Light o' love' : that goes without a burden ; do you sing it, and I'll dance it.

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SCENE IV. *A Room in* Leonato's *House*

Enter Hero, Margaret *and* Ursula.

Hero. Good Ursula, wake up my cousin Beatrice, and desire her to rise.

Ursula. I will, lady.

Hero. And, bid her come here.

Ursula. Well. [*Exit.*

Margaret. Indeed, I think your other collar was better.

Hero. No excuse me, good Meg, I will wear this.

Margaret. By my faith, it is not so good, and I assure you that your cousin will also say so.

Hero. My cousin is a fool, and you are another : I will wear none but this.

Margaret. I like the new head-dress excellently, if the hair inside were slightly browner and your gown is a most rare fashion. I saw the Dutchess of Milan's gown, which they praise so much.

Hero. Oh ! that is surprisingly fine, they say.

Margaret. By my faith, it is but a night-gown in comparison with your : cloth of gold and shaped edges, and trimmed with silver lace set with pearls, close under-sleeves, loose hanging sleeves, and skirts, trimmed all around with bluish tinsel : but for a fine, dainty, graceful and excellent fashion—yours is worth ten of it.

Hero. God, give me joy to wear it for my heart is exceedingly burdened with sorrow.

Margaret. It will be heavier soon by the weight of a man (*i. e.*, after the marriage).

Hero. Shame upon you, are you not ashamed ?

Margaret. Of what, lady ? of speaking of something that is honourable. Is not marriage honourable even in a beggar ? Is not your lord honourable, without marriage ? I thank you wish me to say, 'with due respect to your husband' and if bad thinking does not react upon true thinking, I offend now with my words. Is there any harm in a husband being heavier ? None, I think. If it will be the right husband and the right wife, otherwise it is light and not heavy : you may ask my Lady Beatrice, here she comes.

Enter Beatrice.

Hero. Good morrow, cousin.

Beatrice. Good morrow, sweet Hero.

Hero. Why, what is the matter ? Why do you speak in the manner of a sick person ?

Beatrice. I am out of all other moods, I think.

Margaret. Let us strike into 'Light of love'—(the name of a dance,) which does not require any accompaniment of male voice. You sing it and I will dance it.

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Beatrice. Ye light o' love with your heels ! then, if your husband have stables enough, you 'll see he shall lack no barns. 40

Margaret. O illegitimate construction ! I scorn that with my heels.

Beatrice. 'T is almost five o'clock, cousin : 't is time you were ready. By my troth, I am exceeding ill, Heigh-ho !

Margaret. For a hawk, a horse, or a husband ?

Beatrice. For the letter than begins them all, H.

Margaret. Well, an you be not turned Truk, there's no more sailing by the star. 50

Beatrice. What means the fool, trow ?

Margaret. Nothing I ; but God send every one their heart's desire !

Hero. These gloves the Count sent me ; they are an excellent perfume.

Beatrice. I am stuffed, cousin, I cannot smell.

Margaret. A maid, and stuffed ! there's goodly catching of cold.

Beatrice. O God help me ! God help me ! how long have you professed apprehension ? 60

Margaret. Ever since you left it. Doth not my wit become me rarely ?

Beatrice. It is not seen enough, you should wear it in your cap. By my troth I am sick.

Margaret. Get you some of this distilled Carduus Benedictus, and lay it to your heart ; it is the only thing for a qualm.

Hero. There thou prickest her with a thistle.

Beatrice. Benedictus ! why Benedictus ? you have some moral in this Benedictus.

Margaret. Moral ! no, by my troth, I have no moral meaning ; I meant, plain holy-thistle. You may think, perchance, that I think you are in love ; nay, by'r lady, I am not such a fool to think what I list ; nor I list not to think what I can ; nor indeed, I cannot think, if I would think my heart out of thinking, that you are in love, or that you will be in love, or that you can be in love. Yet Benedick was such another, and now is he become a man : he swore he would never marry ; and yet now, in despite of his heart, he eats his meat without grudging : and how you may be converted, I know not, but methinks you look with your eyes as other women do. 70 80

Beatrice. What pace is this that thy tongue keeps ?

Margaret. Not a false gallop.

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Beatrice. You have a 'Light o' love' dance to that tune, then if your husband has stables enough, you will see that he does not lack in *barns*. (Barns, with a pun, has a double meaning—'Shed for cattle,' and 'children').

Margaret. Oh, it is illegitimate construction. (Here again it has to meanings—(i) wrong interpretation, and (ii) making of illegitimate children. I refuse to dance to that tune.

Beatrice. It is almost five o'clock, cousin. It is time you were ready for marriage. By my faith ; I am extremely ill, High-ho.

Margaret. You cry for a hawk, a horse or a husband ?

Beatrice. For the letter that begins them all—H.

Margaret. Well, if you have turned apostate and fallen in love, then the pole star is no more to be relied on in sailing.

Beatrice. What means the fool, I wonder ?

Margaret. I mean nothing, but may God send all their heart's desire.

Hero. The count sent me these gloves, they have excellent scent.

Beatrice. I am stuffed (my nose is stuffed), I cannot smell.

Margaret. A maid and stuffed ! it is a strange way of catching cold.

Beatrice. Oh, God help me ! God help me ! how long have you made a speciality of quick wit of yourself ?

Margaret. Ever since you ceased to be a wit. Does not my wit befit me splendidly ?

Beatrice. It is not sufficiently displayed ; you should bear it in your cap. By my faith, I am sick.

Margaret. Should I get some of the justice of the carduus benedictus holy-thistle and apply it to your heart. It is the only remedy for a feeling of sickness.

Hero. There you prick her (like a thistle) with thistle.

Beatrice. Benedictus ! Why benedictus ! You have some inner meaning in the mention of benedictus.

Magaret. Hidden meaning, no, by my faith, I have no hidden meaning. I meant plain holy-thistle. You may think perhaps that, I think, you are in love. No by our lady, I am not such a fool to think what I like, nor do I like to think what I can, nor indeed, can I think even if I fag myself out with thinking, that you are in love, or that you will be in love or that you can be in love. Yet Benedick was such another person, and he has become a man (*i.e.*, by falling in love) : he swore that he would never marry and yet now despite his heart, he continues to eat his food without grumbling, and I do not know how you may be changed, but it seems to me that you look with your eyes as other women do.

Beatrice. What pace is this that thy tongue keeps ?

Margaret. It does not go very fast. It keeps to time.

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Re-enter Ursula.

Ursula. Madam, withdraw : the prince, the count, Signior Benedick, Don John, and all the gallants of the town, are come to fetch you to church.

Hero. Hely to dress me, good coz, good Meg, good Ursula. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE V. *Another Room in* Leonato's *House.*

Enter Leonato, *with* Dogberry *and* Verges.

Leonato. What would you with me, honest neighbour ?

Dogberry. Marry, sir, I would have some confidence with you, that decerns you nearly.

Leonato. Brief, I pray you ; for you see it is a busy time with me.

Dogberry. Marry, this it is, sir.

Verges. Yes, in truth it is, sir.

Leonato. What is it, my good friends ?

Dogberry. Goodman Verges, sir, speaks a little off the matter : an old man, sir, and his wits are not so blunt, as God help, I would desire they were ; but, in faith, honest as the skin between his brows. 10

Verges. Yes, I thank God I am as honest as any man living that is an old man and no honest than I.

Dogberry. Comparisons are odorous, palabras, neighbour Verges.

Leonato. Neighbours, you are tedious.

Dogberry. It pleases your worship to say so, but we are the poor duke's officer ; but, truly, for mine own part, If I were as tedious as a king, I could find in my heart to bestow it all of your worship. 20

Leonato. All thy tediousness on me ? ha !

Dogberry. Yea. an' t were a thousand pound more than 't is ; for I hear as good exclamation on your worship, as of any man in the city, and though I be but a poor man, I am glad to hear it.

Verges. And so am I.

Leonato. I would fain know what you have to say.

Verges. Marry, sir our watch tonight, excepting your worship's presence, have ta'en a couple of as arrant knaves as any in Messina. 30

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Re-enter Ursula.

Ursula. Madam, retire : the prince the count, Siginior Benedick, Don John, and all the gentlemen of town are coming to take you to church.

Hero. Help to dress me, good cousin, good Meg, good Ursula. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE V. *Another Room in* Leonato's *House.*

Enter Leonato, *with* Dogberry *and* Verges.

Leonato. What do you want, honest neighbours.

Dogberry. Mary, sir, I shall have some confidential talk with you that intimately concerns you.

Leonato. Be brief, I pray you, for you know that it is busy time with me.

Dogberry. Mary, it is sir.

Verges. Yes, in truth, it is sir.

Leonato. What is it, my good friends.

Dogberry. Goodman Verges, sir, speaks a little beside the point, an old man, sir, and his wits are not so blunt (sharp) as, god helping, I wish them to be, but in faith, he is as honest as the skin between his eye-brows.

Verges. Yes, I thank God, I am as honest as any man living, is there any old man more honest than I am ?

Dogberry. Comparisons are odious : few words, neighbour Verges.

Leonato. Neighbours, you are tedious.

Dogberry. It pleases your honour to say so, but we are the duck's poor officers, and truly for my own part, if I were as tedious as a king, I would be quite willing to put it on to your worship.

Leonato. All your tediousness on me, ah !

Dogberry. Yes, even if it were a thousand pounds more valuable than it is, for I hear as good exclamation on your worship as of any man in the city and though I be only a poor man I am glad to hear it.

Verges. And, so am I.

Leonato. I would like to know what you have to say.

Verges. By Mary, sir, our watch tonight, with due respect to your worship's presence, have captured a couple of as downright knaves as any in Messina.

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Dogberry. A good old man, sir ; he will be talking ; as they say, 'when the age is in, the wit is out'. God help us ! it is a world to see ! Well soid, i' faith, neighbour Verges : well, God's a good man ; an two men ride of a horse, one must ride behind. An honest soul, i' faith, sir ; by my torth he is, as ever broke bread; but God is to be worshipped : all men are not alike; alas ! good neighbour.

Leonato. Indeed, neighbour, he comes too short of you.

Dogberry. Gifts that God gives. 40

Leonato. I must leave you.

Dogberry. One word, sir, our watch, sir have indeed comprehended two aspicious persons, and we would have them this morning examined before your worship.

Leonato. Take their examination yourself, and bring it me : I am now in great haste, as it may appear unto you.

Dogberry. It shall be suffigance.

Leonato. Drink some wine are you go : fare you well.

Enter a Messenger.

Messenger. My lord, they stay for you to give your daughter to her husband. 50

Leonato. I 'll wait upon them : I am ready.

[*Exeunt* Leonato *and* Messenger.

Dogberry. Go, good partner, go get you to Francis Seacoal : bid him being his pen and inkhorn to the gaol : we are now to examination these men.

Verges. And we must do it wisely.

Dogberry. We will spare for no wit. I warrant you ; here's that shall drive some of them to a *non-come* : only get the learned writer to set down our excommunication, and meet me at the gaol. [*Exeunt*.

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Dogberry. A good old man, sir, he will go on talking. As they say, wit goes out as age comes. God help us. This world is worth seeing, well said, indeed. Neighbour Verges, well ! God is a good name. (It is a proverb meaning that the world is as God made it and all is for the best). If two men ride on a horse, one must ride behind. By my faith sir, he is an honest man indeed, but God has to be worshipped. All men are not alike, alas, good neighbour.

Leonato. Surely, neighbour, he is not at all your equal.

Dogberry. Gifts that God gives. (He has gifts that God has given).

Leonato. I must leave you.

Dogberry. One word, sir, our watch have ineed, sir, apprehended two suspicious persons and we will have them examined this morning before your lordship.

Leonato. Take their examination yourself and bring it to me (after your examination). I am in great hurry now, as you may see.

Dogberry. It shall be sufficient.

Leonato. Take some wine before you go, fare you well.

Enter a Messenger.

Messenger. My lord, they wait for you to give your daughter in marriage.

Leonato. I will attend to them, I am ready.

[*Exeunt* Leonato *and* Messenger.

Dogberry. Go, good partner, go to Francis Seacoal, ask him to bring his pen and ink-horn to the jail. We are now to examine those men.

Verges. And, we must do it wisely.

Dogberry. We shall spare no pains, I assure you. Here is one who drive some of them into a light corner or non-plus. Only get the learned writer to write down examination and meet me at the jail. [*Exeunt.*

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ACT IV

SCENE I. *The Inside of a Church.*

Enter Don Pedro, Don John, Leonato, Friar Francis, Claudio, Benedick, Hero, Beatrice *and* Attendants.

Leonato. Come, Friar Francis, be brief : only to the plain form of marriage, and you shall recount their particular duties, afterwards.

Friar. You come hither ; my lord, to marry this lady ?

Claudio. No.

Leonato. To be married to her, Friar ; you come to marry her.

Friar. Lady, you come hither to be married to this Count.

Hero. I do. 10

Friar. If either you know any inward impediment, why you should not be conjoined, I charge you on your souls to utter it.

Claudio. Know you any, Hero ?

Hero. None, my lord.

Friar. Know you any, Count ?

Leonato. I dare make his answer ; none.

Claudio. O ! what men dare do ! what men may do ! what men daily do, not knowing what they do !

Benedick. How now ! Interjections ? Why then, some be 20 of laughing, as, ah, ha, he !

Claudio. Stand thee by, Friar. Father, by your leave :
Will you with free and unconstrained soul
Give me this maid, your daughter ?

Leonato. As freely, son, as God did give her me.

Claudio. And what have I to give you back, whose worth
May counterpoise this rich and precious gift ?

Don Pedro. Nothing, unless you render her again.

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ACT IV

SCENE I. *The Inside of a Church.*

Enter Don Pedro, Don John, Leonato, Friar Francis, Claudio, Benedick, Hero, Beatrice, *and* Attendants.

Leonato. Come, Friar Francis, be brief, confine yourself to the plain form of marriage and you shall tell their particular duties (obligations) afterwards.

Friar. [*To Claudio.*] You come here, my lord, to marry this lady ?

Claudio. No.

Leonato. To be married to her, Friar ; you come to marry her.

Friar. Lady, you come here to be married to this count.

Hero. I do.

Friar. If either of you know of anything which may be an impediment to your marriage, I ask you on your souls to state it.

Claudio. Do you know any, Hero ?

Hero. None, my lord.

Friar. Do you know any, count ?

Leonato. I make a bold answer on his behalf, none.

Claudio. Oh ! men have like idea of what they venture to do, or what they may do, or even what they everyday do !

Benedick. Why are these interjections ? Let there be some laughter, as ah, ha, he !

Claudio. Stand aside, Friar. Father, by your permission, may I ask whether you will give me this maid, your daughter, with free and willing mind.

Leonato. As freely, son, as God gave her to me.

Claudio. And what have I to give you back, whose worth may equal this rich and precious gift ?

Don Pedro. Nothing, unless you give her back again.

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Claudio. Sweet prince, you learn me noble thankfulness.
There, Leonato, take her back again : 30
Give not this rotten orange to your friend ;
She's but the sign and semblance of her honour.
Behold ! how like a maid she blushes here.
O ! what authority and show of truth
Can cunning sin cover itself withal.
Comes not that blood as modest evidence
To witness simple virtue ? would you not swear,
All you that see her, that she were a maid,
By these exterior shows ? But she is none :
She knows the heat of a luxurious bed ; 40
Her blush is guiltiness, not modesty.

Leonato. What do you mean, my lord ?

Claudio. Not to be married,
Not to knit my soul to an approved wanton.

Leonato. Dear my lord, if you, in your own proof,
Have vanquished the resistance of her youth,
And made defeat of her virginity.

Claudio. I know what you would say : if I have known her,
You 'll say the did embrace me as husband,
And so extenuate the 'forehand sin :
No, Leonato.
I never tempted her with word too large ; 50
But, as a brother to his sister, show'd
Bashful sincerity and comely love.

Hero. And seem'd I ever otherwise to you ?

Claudio. Out on thee ! seeming ! I will write again it :
You seem to me as Dian in her orb.
As chaste as is the bud ere it be blown ;
But you are more intemperate in your blood
Than Venus, or those pamper'd animals
That rage in savage sensuality. 60

Hero, Is my lord well, that he doth speak so wide ?

Leonato. Sweet prince, why speak not you ?

Don Pedro. What should I speak ?
I stand dishonour'd, that have gone about
To link my dear friend to a common state.

Leonato. Are these things spoken, or do I but dream ?

Don John. Sir, they are spoken, and these things are true.

Benedick. This looks not like a nuptial.

Hero. True ! O God !

Claudio. Leonato, stand I here ?
Is this the prince ? Is this the prince's brother ? 70
Is this face Hero's ? are our eyes our own ?

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Claudio. Sweet prince, you teach me how to show thankfulness. Leonato, take her back again and do not give this rotten orange to your friend. She is only a sign and outward appearance of her virtue. Look how she blushes like a maid. With what authority and show of truth can the cunning sin hide itself. Do not those blushes serve as evidence of her modesty and simple virtue ? Would you not swear —all of you who see her,—that she was a maid on the evidence of these apparent signs. But she is none, she knows the heat of a luxurious bed. Her blush is of guilt, not of modesty.

Leonato. What do you mean, my lord ?

Claudio. Not to be married, not to join my soul to one, who has been proved of loose character.

Leonato. My dear lord, if you, as you say you have a proof, have overcome her youthful virginity.

Claudio. I know what you are going to say. If I knew her from before, you will say that she did embrace me as a husband and (in this way) you will mitigate her sin done beforehand. No, Leonato ! I never tempted her with loose words but addressed her as a brother does to a sister, in words of sincere and approved love.

Hero. And did I ever appear otherwise to you ?

Claudio. You should be away with what appearance you may wear, I will protest against it. You seem to me as chaste as the moon in her orbit and as pure as the bud before it has blossomed. But you are more lustful in your blood than even Venus or those pampered animals that rage in savage sensuality.

Hero. Is my lord well, when he so speaks wide of the truth ?

Leonato. Sweet prince, why do you not speak ?

Don Pedro. What should I speak ? I stand dishonoured in that I have endeavoured to join my friend (Claudio) to a common harlot.

Leonato. Are these things really spoken, or do I dream ?

Don John. Sir they are spoken and these things are true.

Benedick. This looks not like a wedding.

Hero. True ! Oh God !

Claudio. Leonato, do I stand here ? Is this the prince ? Is this the prince's brother ? Is this face Hero's ? Are our eyes our own ?

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Leonato. All this is so ; but of this, my lord ?

Claudio. Let me but move one question to your daughter,
And by that fatherly and kindly power
That you have in her, bid her answer truly.

Leonato. I charge thee do so, as thou art my child.

Hero. O God defend me ! how am I beset !
What kind of catechizing call you this ?

Claudio. To make you answer truly to your name.

Hero. Is it not Hero ? Who can blot that name
With any just reproach ?

Claudio. Marry, that can Hero : 80
Hero itself can blot out Hero's virtue.
What man was he talk'd with you yesternight
Out at your window, betwixt twelve and one ?
Now, if you are a maid, answer to this.

Hero. I talk'd with no man at that hour, my lord.

Don Pedro. Why, then are you no maiden. Leonato,
I am sorry you must hear : upon mine honour,
Myself, my brother, and this grieved count,
Did see her, hear her, at that hour last night,
Talk with a ruffian at her chamber-window ; 90
Who hath indeed, most like a liberal villain.
Confess'd the vile encounters they have had
A thousand times in secret.

Don John. Fie, fie ! they are not to be named, my lord,
Not to be spoke of ;
There is not chastity enough in language
Without offence to utter them. Thus, pretty lady,
I am sorry for thy much misgovernment.

Claudio. O Hero ! what a Hero hadst thou been,
If half thy outward graces had been placed 100
About thy thoughts and counsels of thy heart.
But fare thee well, most foul, most fair ! farewell,
Thou pure impiety, and impious purity !
For thee I'll lock up all the gates of Love,
And on my eyelids shall conjecture hang,
To turn all beauty into thoughts of harm,
And never shall it more be gracious.

Leonato. Hath no man's dagger here apoint for me
[Hero *swoons*.

Beatrice. Why, how now, cousin ! wherefore sink you
down ? 110

Don John. Come, let us go. These things, come thus to light,
Smother her spirits up.

[*Exeunt* Don Pedro, Don John, *and* Claudio.

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Leonato. All this is so, but what of it my lord ?

Claudio. Let me put but one question to your daughter and by the fatherly and natural power that you have over her, you ask her to answer it truly.

Leonato. I command you to do so, as you are my child.

Hero. O God, defend me, how am I attacked ! What kind of cross-examining do you call this ?

Claudio. The object of it is to make you answer truly as to what you are.

Hero. Is it not true that I am Hero ? Who can stain the name with any disgrace ?

Claudio. By Mary, that Hero herself can do. Hero herself can blot out Hero's virtue. Who was the man that talked to you last night, out at your window, between twelve and one ? Now if you are a maid answer this.

Hero. I talked with no man at that hour, my lord.

Don Pedro Why, then you are no maiden. Leonato, I am sorry (to tell you and) you must hear : I say upon my honour that myself, my brother, and this grieved count did see her, hear her, talking to a common fellow at that hour of the night at her chamber-window, who indeed like a villain confessed the secret meetings they have had a thousand times.

Don John. No, no ! They are not to be mentioned, my lord, or to be spoken about. They can only be described in a vulgar language. Therefore, pretty lady, I am sorry for your misconduct.

Claudio. O Hero ! what great character you would have been, if but half your outward excellence had been transferred to your thoughts and the feelings of your heart. But I bid you farewell—you, most foul within and most fair without, you have outward beauty with impure heart. It is for you that I shall shut all the gates of my heart against love, and teach my own eyes to suspect to something wrong where beauty is—and never shall beauty of women attract me again.

Leonato. Has no man here a dagger to stab me with ? [*Hero faints.*

Beatrice. Why, how now, cousin ! why do you faint ?

Don John. Come, let us go. These things revealed thus have left her spirits confounded.

[*Exeunt* Don Pedro, Don John *and* Claudio.

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Benedick. How doth the Lady ?

Beatrice. Dead, I think ; help, uncle !
Hero ! why, Hero ! Uncle ! Signior Benedick ! Friar !

Leonato. O Fate ! take not away thy heavy hand :
Death is the fairest cover for her shame
That may be wish'd for.

Beatrice. How now, cousin Hero !

Friar. Have comfort, lady.

Leonato. Dost thou look up ?

Friar. Yea ; wherefore should she not ?

Leonato. Wherefore ! Why doth not every earthly thing 120
Cry shame upon her ? Could she here deny
The story that is printed in her blood ?
Do not live, Hero ; do not ope thine eyes :
For, did I think you woulds't not quickly die,
Thought I thy spirits were stronger than thy shames.
Myself would, on the rearward of reproaches,
Strike at thy life. Grieved I, I had but one ?
Chid I for that at frugal Nature's frame ?
O ! one too much by thee. Why had I one ?
Why ever wast thou lovely in my eyes ? 130
Why had I not with charitable hand
Took up a beggar's issue at my gates,
Who smirched thus, and mired with infamy,
I might have said, 'No part of it is mine ;
This shame derives itself from unknown loins' ?
But mine, and mine I loved, and mine I praised,
And mine that I was proud on, mine so much
That I myself was to myself not mine,
Valuing of her ; why, she—O ! she is fallen
Into a pit of ink, that the wide sea 140
Hath drops too few to wash her clean again,
And salt too little which may season give
To her foul tainted flesh.

Benedick. Sir, sir, be patient.
For my part, I am so attired in wonder,
I know not what to say.

Beatrice. O ! on my soul, my cousin is bel'ed.

Benedick. Lady, were you her bedfellow last night ?

Beatrice. No, truly not ; although, until last night,
I have this twelvemonth been her bedfellow.

Leonato. Confirm'd confirm'd ! O ! that is stronger made, 150
Which was before barr'd up with ribs of iron.
Would the two princes lie ; and Claudio lie,
Who loved her so, that speaking of her foulness,
Wash'd it with tears ? Hence from her, let her die.

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Benedick. How does the lady do ?

Beatrice. Dead, I think : help, uncle ! Hero ! why, Hero ! uncle ! Signior Benedick ! Friar !

Leonato. O Fate, do not take away your victim of affliction. Death is the best cover for her shame, that could be desired.

Beatrice. How are you now, cousin Hero ?

Friar. Have comfort, lady.

Leonato. Do you look up ?

Friar. Why (wherefore) should she not ?

Leonato. Wherefore ! why does not every earthly thing cry shame upon her ? Could she here deny the story which her own blushes tell to be true. Do not live, Hero. Do not open your eyes. If I thought that you would not quickly die and that your spirit was strong enough to make light of this shame, I myself would following my reproaches strike you dead. Did I ever show my sorrow at the fact that I had only one child ? Did I ever complain on that score at the frugal disposition of Nature ? Even one, like you, is too much. Why did I have only one ? Why were you ever lovely in my eyes ? Why had I not out of love and compassion taken up a beggar's child at my gates, about whom, when she had thus covered herself with a bad name, I might have said. No part of this shame is mine ; this shame is inherited from some unknown father ?" But my child, whom I loved as mine and praised as mine and was pround of as mine, and who so much mine that I hardly belonged to myself, but to her, so much did I value her, why, she, oh, she is fallen into such a pit of infamy that the wide sea has not water enough to wash her clean again and salt too little to purge her of her uncleanliness.

Benedick. Sir, sir, be patient, for my part I am so amazed that I do not know what to say.

Beatrice. O ! I swear on my soul, that my cousin is slandered

Benedick. Lady, were you her bedfellow last night ?

Beatrice. No, truly not, I was not, although untile last night I have been her bedfellow for the last twelve months.

Leonato. Confirmed, confirmed ! O ! that makes the proof stronger, though it was already as strong as if made of iron bars. Would the two princes lie and would Claudio lie, who loved her so much that in speaking of her wickedness, he shed tears ? Away from her and let her die.

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Friar. Hear me a little;
For I have only been silent so long,
And given way unto this course of fortune;
By noting of the lady; I have mark'd
A thousand blushing apparitions
To start into her face; a thousand innocent shames 160
In angel whiteness beat away those blushes;
And in her eye there hath appear'd a fire,
To burn the errors that these princes hold
Against her maiden truth. Call me a fool;
Trust not my reading nor my observations,
Which with experimental seal doth warrant
The tenour of my book; trust not my age,
My reverence, calling, nor divinity,
If this sweet lady lie not guiltless here
Under some biting error.

Leonato. Friar, it cannot be. 170
Thou seest that all the grace that she hath left
Is that she will not add to her damnation
A sin of perjury: she not denies it,
Why seek'st thou then to cover with excuse
That which appears in proper nakedness?

Friar. Lady, what man is he you are accused of?

Hero. They know that do accuse me, I know none.
If I know more of any man alive
Than that which maiden modesty doth warrant,
Let all my sins lack mercy! O my father! 180
Prove you that any man with me conversed
At hours unmeet, or that I yesternight
Maintain'd the change of words with any creature,
Refuse me, hate me, torture me to death.

Friar. There is some strange misprision in the princes.

Benedick. Two of them have the very bent of honour;
And if their wisdoms be misled in this,
The practice of it lives in John the bastard,
Whose spirits toil in frame of villanies.

Leonato. I know not. If they speak but truth of her, 190
These hands shall tear her; if they wrong her honour,
The proudest of them shall well hear of it.
Time hath not yet so dried this blood of mine.
Nor age so eat up my invention.
Nor fortune made such havoc of my means,
Nor my bad life reft me so much of friends,
But they shall find, awaked in such a kind,
Both strenght of limb and policy of mind,
Ability in means and choice of friends,
To quit me of them throughly.

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Friar. Hear me a little for I have been silent so long and allowed things to take its course, only because I have been watching the lady. I have watched her face flush again and again and go pale as quickly again in her shame because she is innocent of the slanderous charge with a fire in her eyes. You may call me a fool and not trust my reading of the situation or even my observations which with the seal of my experince have confirmed the purport of what I have seen; you may even not trust my age, my reverence, my profession or holiness, if this sweet lady, who lies here, was not innocent. She is a victim of some mischief.

Leonato. Friar, it cannot be; you see that all the grace that she has left is that she will not add to her damnable shame the sin of falsely swearing that she is innocent. She does not deny it. Why do you seek then to cover the guilt that stands exposed in all its ugliness?

Friar. Lady, who is the man you are charged to be guilty with.

Hero. They, who accuse me, know: I know none. If I have anything to do with any living man more than the limits of maidenly modesty, let God not forgive me for my sins. O, my father! if you prove that any man conversed with me at odd hours, or that last night I exchanged words with any creature, you may disown me, hate me and torture me to death.

Friar. There is some strange mistake in the princes.

Benedick. Two of them are honourable to the highest degree, and if their wisdom has been misled in this matter, it is, because of the plan of Don John, the bastard, who spends all his intelligence in devising mischief.

Leonato. I do not know, if they speak truth of her, these hands shall tear her; if they falsely involve her honour, even the proudest of them shall have to pay for it. Time has not yet so dried my blood, nor has age so consumed my mental power, nor has fortune disabled my means, nor has my bad life bereft me to such an extent of friends, but those people shall find that I can rouse myself in such a manner—both with the strength of limbs and the sagacity of mind together with ample resources and the choice of friends, so as to avenge the wrong thoroughly.

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Friar. Pause awhile, 200
And let my counsel sway you in this case.
Your daughter here the princes left for dead ;
Let her awhile be secretly kept in,
And publish it that she is dead indeed :
Maintain a mourning ostentation
And on your family's old monument
Hang mournful epitaphs and do all rites
That appertain unto a burial.

Leonato. What shall become of this ? what will this do ?

Friar. Marry, this well carried shall on her behalf 210
Change slander to remorse ; that is some good :
But not for that dream I on this strange course,
But on this travail look for greater birth.
She dying, as it must be so maintain'd,
Upon the instant that she was accused,
Shall be lamented, pitied and excused
Of every hearer ; for it so falls out
That what we have we prize not to the worth
Whiles we enjoy it, but being lack'd and lost,
Why, then we rack the value, then we find 220
The virtue that possession would not show us
Whiles it was ours. So will it fare with Claudio :
When he shall hear she died upon his words,
The idea of her life shall sweetly creep
Into his study of imagination,
And every lovely organ of her life
Shall come apparell'd in more psecious habit,
More moving-delicate and full of life,
Into the eye and prospect of his soul.
Than when she lived indeed : then shall he mourn, 230
If ever love had interest in his liver,
And wish he had not so accused her,
No, though he thought his accusation true
Let this be so, and doubt not but success
Will fashion the event in better shape
Than I can lay it down in likelihood,
But if all aim but this be levell'd false,
The supposition of the lady's death
Will quench the wonder of her infamy :
And if it sort not well, you may conceal her, 240
As best befits her wounded reputation,
In some reclusive and religious life,
Out of all eyes, tongues, minds, and injuries.

Benedick. Signior Leonato, let the Friar advise you :
And though you know my inwardness and love
Is very much unto the prince and Claudio,
Yet, by mine honour, I will deal in this

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Friar. Wait for a while and accept my advice in this case. Let your daughter (who has been left as dead) be kept indoors secretly for a while and it be made known that she is dead indeed. Let us maintain a mourning for show. You may also inscribe a mourning epitaph on your family's old tomb and perform all ceremonies that relate to a burial.

Leonato. What shall be the result of this ? What will this lead to ?

Friar. By Mary, if this plan is well managed in her interest, it shall change the slander into the compassion for her ; that shall bring some good. It is not for this that I think of this action but I expect something greater to emerge from this painful experience. Her death, as it must be maintained at the present moment, when she has been charged with infamy, shall be lamented, pitied and excused by every hearer, for it usually happens that we do not prize a thing according to its worth when we have it, but when we lose it and feel the want of it, we then realize its value, which we could not assess when it was in our possession. So will it happen with Claudio. When he shall hear that she died on hearing his words of dishonour, the idea of Hero's beauty shall creep into the imagination of Claudio and he will revise his view in regard to the beautiful features of Hero, and Hero shall appear in more beautiful appearance, more movingly delicate and in more lively form than when she was alive in his vision. He shall then mourn, if indeed love had a place in his heart and he wished that he had not so accused her, even though he had thought that his accusation was true, then you should manage in this fashion, we have no doubt that things will shape in a better fashion.

But if we miss our aim, the lady being supposed dead, her dishonour will die soon, if it does not turn out well, you may hide her. It would be proper that she was hid in a convent away from the eyes, tongues and thoughts of men and the disgrace they cause to her.

Benedick. Signior Leonato, follow Friar's advice. Though you know my love and intimacy with the prince and Claudio, I swear

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As secretly and justly as your soul
Should with your body.

Leonato. Being that I flow in grief,
The smallest twine may lead me, 250

Friar. 'T is well consented ; presently away ;
For to strange sores, strangely they strain the cure.
Come, lady, die to live : this wedding day
Perhaps is but prolong'd ; have patience and endure.

[*Exeunt* Friar, Hero *and* Leonato.

Benedick. Lady Beatrice, have you wept all this while ?

Beatrice. Yea, and I will weep a while longer.

Benedick. I will not desire that.

Beatrice. You have no reason ; I do it freely.

Benedick. Surely I do believe your fair cousin is wronged.

Beatrice. Ah ! how much might the man deserve of me 260 that would right her.

Benedick. Is there any way to show such friendship ?

Beatrice. A very even way, but no such friend.

Benedick. May a man do it ?

Beatrice. It is a man's office, but not yours.

Benedick. I do love nothing in the world so well as you : is not that strange ?

Beatrice. As strange as the thing I know not. It were as possible for me to say I loved nothing so well as you ; but believe me not ; and yet I lie not ; I confess nothing, nor I 270 deny nothing. I am sorry for my cousin.

Benedick. By my sword, Beatrice, thou lovest me.

Beatrice. Do not swear by it, and eat it.

Benedick. I will swear by it that you love me ; and I will make him eat it that says I love not you.

Beatrice. Will you not eat your word ?

Benedick. With no sauce that can be devised to it. I protest I love thee.

Beatrice. Why then, God forgive me !

Benedick. What offence, sweet Beatrice ? 280

Beatrice. You have stayed me in a happy hour ; I was about to protest I loved you.

Benedick. And do it with all thy heart.

Beatrice. I love you with so much of my heart that none is left to protest.

Benedick. Come, bid me do anything for thee.

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by my honour, I will deal in this matter as secretly as your soul should be dealing with your body.

Leonato. Because I am in grief I might be guided by any small advice that would be offered to me.

Friar. You have consented very well. Let us go away immediately because men have strange remedies for strange injuries. Come, lady. Pretend to die and thereafter you will live a happy life. It appears this wedding-day is perhaps only postponed. You may suffer till then in patience. [*Exeunt all but* Benedick *and* Beatrice.

Benedick. Lady Beatrice, have you been weeping all this time ?

Beatrice. Yes, and I will weep a while longer.

Benedick. I will not want that.

Beatrice. You have no reason, I do it freely.

Benedick. Surely, I do believe your fair cousin is falsely accused.

Beatrice. How much grateful would I feel to the man, who would avenge her wrong.

Benedick. Is there any way to show such friendship ?

Beatrice. A very plain way, but there is no such friend.

Benedick. May a man do it ?

Beatrice. It is a man's duty, but not yours. (It is not yours because you are in no way obliged to do it.)

Benedick. I love nothing in world so well as you. Is that not strange ?

Beatrice. It is as strange as anything which I do not know of. It might be as possible for me to say that I loved nothing so well as you, but believe me not, and yet I do not lie, I confess nothing and deny nothing, I am sorry for my cousin.

Benedick. By my sword, Beatrice, you love me.

Beatrice. Do not swear by it, and eat the word (sword is for word).

Benedick. I will swear by it that you love me and I will thrash him who says that I do not love you.

Beatrice. Will you not eat your word ? (go back from your word.)

Benedick. Nothing delicious will make me eat my word. I sincerely declare that I love you.

Beatrice. Why, then, God forgive me !

Benedick. For what offence, sweet Beatrice ?

Beatrice. You have stopped me in good time. I was about to protest that I loved you.

Benedick. Then do it with all your heart.

Beatrice. I love you with so much of my heart that none is there to protest to what you say.

Benedick. Come, bid me do anything for you.

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Beatrice. Kill Claudio.

Benedick. Ha ! not for the wide world.

Beatrice. You kill me to deny it. Farewell.

Benedick. Tarry, sweet Beatrice. 290

Beatrice. I am gone, though I am here ; there is no love in you : nay, I pray you, let me go.

Benedick. Beatrice,—

Beatrice. I faith, I will go.

Benedick. We 'll be friends first.

Beatrice. You dare easier be friends with me than fight with mine enemy.

Benedick. Is Claudio thine enemy ?

Beatrice. Is he not approved in the height a villain, that hath slandered, scorned, dishonoured my kinswoman ? O ! that 300 I were a man. What ! bear her in hand until they come to take hands, and then with public accusation, uncovered slander, unmitigated rancour,—O God ! that I were a man. I would eat his heart in the market-place.

Benedick. Hear me, Beatrice,—

Beatrice. Talk with a man out at a window ! A proper saying !

Benedick. Nay, but, Beatrice,—

Beatrice. Sweet Hero ! She is wronged, she is slandered, she is undone. 310

Benedick. Beat—

Beatrice. Princes and counties ! Surely, a princely testimony, a goodly count, Count Comfect ; a sweet gallant, surely ! O ! that I were a man for his sake, or that I had any friend would be a man for my sake ! But manhood is melted into curtesies, valour into compliment, and men are only turned into tongue, and trim ones too : he is now as valiant as Hercules, that only tells a lie and swears it. I cannot be a man with wishing, therefore I will die a woman with grieving.

Benedick. Tarry, good Beatrice. By this hand, I love thee. 320

Beatrice. Use it for my love some other way than swearing by it.

Benedick. Think you in your soul the Count Claudio hath wronged Hero ?

Beatrice. Yea, as sure as I have a thought or a soul.

Benedick. Enough ! I am engaged ; I will challenge him. I will kiss your hand, and so I leave you. By this hand, Claudio shall render me a dear account. As you hear of me, so think of me. Go, comfort your cousin ; I must say she is dead ; and so farewell. [*Exeunt.* 330

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Beatrice. Kill Claudio.

Benedick. Ha, not for the wide world.

Beatrice. If you refuse to do so, you, better kill me : farewell to you.

Benedick. Stay, sweet Beatrice.

Beatrice. My heart has gone from you, though I am here in person. There is no love in you. I pray you let me go.

Benedick. Beatrice.

Beatrice. Indeed, I will go.

Benedick. We will be friends first.

Beatrice. You find it easier to be my friend than to fight with my enemy.

Benedick. Is Claudio your enemy !

Beatrice. Is he not proved to the utmost to be a villain who has slandered, scorned and dishonoured my cousin ? Oh, if I were a man ! what delude her with false hopes until they come to join hands before the priests and to insult her with a public accusation, direct ill-fame and sheer malice. Oh, God, if I were a man, I would eat his heart in the market-place.

Benedick. Hear me, Beatrice.

Beatrice. Talk with a man out at a window ! What a fine thing to say ?

Benedick. Nay, but Beatrice.

Beatrice. Sweet Hero, she is wronged, she is slandered, she is undone.

Benedick. Beat—

Beatrice. Princes and counts ! Surely a princely bearing of witness, a goodly count, Count sweetmeat, a sweet gentleman, surely ! oh, that I were a man for his sake ; or that I had a friend who would be a man for my sake ! But manhood has melted into curtesies, valour into compliment and men are only turned into talkers, and their tongues being very smooth too ; he is now as valiant as Hercules, who only tells a lie and swears it : I cannot be a man merely by wishing. Therefore I will die a woman with grief.

Benedick. Wait, good Beatrice : by this hand I swear that I love you.

Beatrice. Use it for the sake of my love in some other way than swearing by it.

Benedick. Do you really believe that Count Claudio has wronged Hero ?

Beatrice. Yes, as sure as I have a thought or a soul.

Benedick. Enough ! I give you my pledge. I will challenge him. I will kiss your hand and so leave you. By this hand, I say, Claudio shall dearly pay for it. As you hear of my conduct, you may judge me so. Go and comfort your cousin ; I must say that she is dead. So farewell. [*Exeunt.*

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SCENE II. *A Prison.*

Enter Dogberry, Verges, *and* Sexton *in gowns* ; *and the* Watch, *with* Conrade *and* Borachio.

Dogberry. Is our whole dissembly appeared ?

Verges. O ! a stool and a cushion for the Sexton.

Sexton. Which be the malefactors ?

Dogberry. Mary, that am I and my partner.

Verges. Nay, that's certain : we have the exhibition to examine.

Sexton. But which are the offenders, that are to be examined ? Let them come before Master constable.

Dogberry. Yea, marry, let them come before me. What is your name, friend ? 10

Borachio. Borachio.

Dogberry. Pray write down Borachio. Yours, sirrah.

Conrade. I am a gentleman, sir, and my name is Conrade.

Dogberry. Write down Master gentleman Conrade. Master, do you serve God ?

Both. Yea, sir, we hope.

Dogberry. Write down, that they hope they serve God : and write God first, for God defend but God should go before such villains ! Masters, it is proved already that you are little better than false knaves, and it will go near to be thought so 20 shortly. How answer you for yourselves ?

Conrade. Marry, sir, we say we are none.

Dogberry. A marvellous witty fellow, I assure you : but I will go about with him. Come you hither, sirrah : a word in your ear ; sir, I say to you, it is thought you are false knaves.

Borachio. Sir, I say to you we are none ?

Dogberry. Well, stand aside. 'Fare God, they are both in a tale. Have you writ down, that they are none ?

Sexton. Master constable, you go not the way to examine : you must call forth the watch that are their accusers. 30

Dogberry. Yea, marry, that's the eftest way. Let the watch come forth. Masters, I charge you, in the prince's name, accuse these men.

Watch 1. This man said, sir, that Don John the prince's brother, was a villain.

Dogberry. Write down prince John a villain. Why, this is flat perjury, to call a prince's brother villain.

Borachio. Master constable,—

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SCENE II. *The Constable's Room.*

Enter Dogberry, Verges *and* Sexton *in gowns and the* Watch, *with* Conrade *and* Borachio.

Dogberry. Has our whole assembly appeared ?

Verges. Oh, a stool and a cushion for the Sexton.

Sexton. Who are the malefactors (evil-doers) ?

Dogberry. By Mary, that am I and my partner.

Verges. Nay, that is certain : we have the authority to examine.

Sexton. But who are the offenders that are to be examined ? Let them come before Master constable.

Dogberry. Yes, by Mary, let them come before me : what is your name friend ?

Borachio. Borachio.

Dogberry. Please write down Borachio. Yours, fellow.

Conrade. I am a gentleman, sir, and my name is Conrade.

Dogberry. Write down master gentleman Conrade : friends, do you serve God ?

Both. Yes, sir, we hope.

Dogberry. Write down that they hope they serve God ; and write God first, for God forbid that God should not go before such villains. Masters, it is proved already that you are a little better than false knaves and it will very probably be thought so shortly. How do you answer in your defence ?

Conrade. By Mary, sir, we say that we are not knaves.

Dogberry. A marvellous witty fellow, I assure you that I will outwit him. Please come here. I have to say one word into your ear. It is thought that you are a false knave.

Borachio. Sir, I say to you, we are not knaves.

Dogberry. Well, stand aside. In the name of God both tell the same story. Have you written down that they are not knaves.

Sexton. Master constable, you do not go about the examination in the proper way. You must call for the watch who have accused them.

Dogberry. Yes, by Mary, that is the most skilful way. Let the watch come forth : Master, I charge you in the name of the prince, accuse these men.

Watch 1. This man said sir, than Don John, the prince's brother, was a villain.

Dogberry. Write down that prince John is a villain. Why, this is a downright slander to call the brother of the prince a villain.

Borachio. Master constable,

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Dogberry. Pray thee, fellow, peace : I do not like thy look, I promise thee. 40

Sexton. What heard you him say else ?

Watch 2. Marry, that he had received a thousand ducats of Don John for accusing the Lady Hero wrongfully.

Dogberry. Flat burglary as ever was committed.

Verges. Yea, by the mass, that it is.

Sexton. What else, fellow ?

Watch 1. And that Count Claudio did mean, upon his words, to disgrace Hero before the whole assembly, and not marry her.

Dogberry. O villain ! thou wilt be condemned into everlasting redemption for this. 50

Sexton. What else ?

Watch 2. This is all.

Sexton. And this is more, masters, than you can deny. Prince John is this morning secretly stolen away : Hero was in this manner accused, in this very manner refused, and upon the grief of this suddenly died. Master constable, let these men be bound, and brought to Leonato's : I will go before and show him their examination. [*Exit*.

Dogberry. Come, let them be opinioned. 60

Verges. Let them be in the hands.

Conrade. Off, Coxcomb !

Dogberry. God's my life ; where 's the Sexton ? let him write down the prince's officer coxcomb. Come, bind them. Thou naughty varlet !

Conrade. Away ! you are an ass ; you are an ass.

Dogberry. Dost thou not suspect my place ? Dost thou not suspect my years ? O that he were here to write me down an ass ! but masters, remember that I am an ass : though it be not written down, yet forget not that I am an ass. No, 70 thou villain, thou art full of piety, as shall be proved upon thee by good witness. I am a wise fellow ; and, which is more, an officer ; and, which is more, a householder ; and, which is more, as pretty a piece of flesh as any is in Messina ; and one that knows the law, go to ; and a rich fellow enough, go to ; and a fellow that hath had losses ; and one that hath two gowns, and every thing handsome about him. Bring him away. O that I had been writ down an ass ! [*Exeunt*.

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Dogberry. Pray, you fellow, be silent : I do not like your appearance, I assure you.

Sexton. What more did you hear him say ?

Watch 2. By Mary that he had received a thousand ducats from Don John for accusing the lady Hero wrongfully.

Dogberry. A clear case of burglary that was ever committed.

Verges. Yes, by the mass, that it is.

Sexton. What else, fellow ?

Watch 1. And that count Claudio, as a consequence of his words, disgraced Hero before the whole assembly, and grace a word not to marry her.

Dogberry. O, villain ! You will be condemned to everlasting damnation for this.

Sexton. What else ?

Watch 2. This is all.

Sexton. And, this is more than what you can deny. Prince John has secretly stolen always this morning ; and Hero was in this way accused, and for this reason, she was rejected, and on account of grief for this reason she suddenly died. Master constable, let these persons be bound and taken to Leonato's house : I will go earlier and show him the report of their examination. [*Exit*.

Dogberry. Come, let them be bound.

Verges. Let them be in the hands.

Conrade. Away, you fool.

Dogberry. God save my life ! Where is the Sexton ? Let him write down that he has called the officer of the prince, a fool. Come, bind them, you worthless knave.

Conrade. Away, you are an ass, you are an ass.

Dogberry. Do you not respect my position ? Do you not respect me for my age ? If he (that is, the Sexton) were to write down that I have been called an ass ! but masters, remember that I am an ass ; though it is not written down, yet forget not that I am an ass. No, you villain, you are full of impiety as shall be proved by a witness against you. I am a wise fellow and what is more an officer, and what is still more a householder, and what is further more as handsome a man as any in Messina, and one who knows the law, well ; a rich fellow enough, well ; and fellow who has had losses ; and one who has two gowns and everything fine about him. Bring him away. O, that I had been written down an ass !

[*Exeunt*.

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ACT V

SCENE I. *Before* Leonato's *House.*

Enter Leonato *and* Antonio.

Antonio. If you go on thus, you will kill yourself;
And 't is not wisdom thus to second grief
Against yourself.

Leonato. I pray thee, cease thy counsel,
Which falls into mine ears as profitless
As water in a sieve; give not me counsel;
Nor let no comforter delight mine ear
But such a one whose wrong do suit with mine.
Bring me a father that so loved his child.
Whose joy of her is overwhelm'd like mine,
And bid him speak of patience; 10
Measure his woe the length and breadth of mine,
And let it answer every strain for strain,
As thus for thus and such a grief for such,
In every lineament, branch, shape, and form:
If such a one will smile, and stroke his beard,
And sorrow wag, cry 'hem! when he should groan,
Patch grief with proverbs, make misfortune drunk
With candle-wasters; bring him yet to me,
And I of him will gather patience.
But there is no such man; for, brother, men 20
Can counsel and speak comfort to that grief
Which they themselves not feel; but tasting it,
Their counsel turns to passion, which before
Would give preceptial medicine to rage
Fetter strong madness in a silken thread,
Charm ache with air and agony with words
No, no; 't is all men's office, to speak patience
To those that wring under the load of sorrow,
But no man's virtue no sufficiency
To be so moral when he shall endure 30
The like himself. Therefore give me no counsel;
My griefs cry louder than advertisment.

Antonio. Therein do men from children nothing differ.

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ACT V

SCENE I. *Before* Leonato's *House.*

Enter Leonato *and* Antonio.

Antonio. If you go on feeling sorry in this way, you will kill yourself ; and it is not wise to nurse grief.

Leonato. I pray you to stop your advice which falls on my ears as uselessly as water in a sieve : do not give me advice and let no sympathiser try to speak pleasant words to me except such a man has suffered like me. Bring me a father who so loved his child, whose joy in her so completely dashed as mine, and ask him to speak of patience ; compare his grief with mine in detail, point in point, to see whether in every particular it has the same intensity, if such a man will smile and stroke his bread and bid sorrow begone and cry 'hem', when he should indulge in his grief, mend grief with maxims and drug it with philosophy ; bring him indeed to me and I will learn patience from him. But there is no such man, for brother, men can offer advice and consolation to that grief which they do not themselves feel, but when they taste grief, their wisdom turns to sorrow, which, that is their wisdom, would try to cure passion with. The medicine of precepts, to bind up a strong madman with a silken thread, and to cure pain with air, and agony with word ; no, no ; all men may presume to advise patience to those who writhe under the weight of sorrow, but no man is strong or patient enough to moralise in this manner when he has to suffer similarly. Therefore give me no advice ; my griefs outclamour all admonition.

Antonio. In grief there is not much difference between men and children.

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Leonato. I pray the, peace ! I will be flesh and blood ;
For there was never yet philosopher
That could endure the tooth-ache patiently.
However they have write the style of gods
And made a push at chance and sufferance.

Antonio. Yet bend not all the harm upon yourself ;
Make those that do offend you suffer too. 40

Leonato. There thou speak'st reason : nay, I will do so.
My soul doth tell me Hero is belie'd ;
And that shall Claudio know ; so shall the prince,
And all of them that thus dishonour her.

Enter Don Pedro *and* Claudio.

Antonio. Here comes the prince and Claudio hastily.

Don Pedro. Good den, good den.

Claudio. Good day to both of you.

Leonato. Hear you, my lords,—

Don Pedro. We have some haste, Leonato.

Leonato. Some haste, my lord ! well, fare you well, my lord :
Are you so hasty now ? well, all is one.

Don Pedro. Nay, do not quarrel with us, good old man. 50

Leonato. If he could right himself with quarrelling,
Some of us would lie low.

Claudio. Who wrongs him ?

Leonato. Marry, thou dost wrong me ! thou, dissembler, thou.
Nay, never lay thy hand upon thy sword ;
I fear thee not.

Claudio. Marry, beshrew my hand,
If it should give your age such cause of fear.
In faith, my hand meant nothing to my sword.

Leonato. Tush, tush, man ! never fleer and jest at me :
I speak not like a dotard nor a fool,
As, under privilege of age, to brag 60
What I have done being young, or what would do,
Were I not old. Know, Claudio, to thy head,
Thou hast so wrong'd mine innocent child and me
That I am forced to lay my reverence by,
And, with grey hairs and bruise of many days,
Do challenge thee to trial of a man.
I say thou hast belied mine innocent child :
Thy slander hath gone through and through her heart,
And she lies buried with her ancestors ;
O ! in a tomb where never scandal slept, 70
Save this of hers, framed by thy villainy.

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Leonato. I pary you to keep quiet. I cannot be anything other than a mortal because there has not been any philosopher so far who could quietly suffer toothache, though they might have written in the manner of goods or scorned or pooh-poohed misfortune and suffering.

Antonio. You do not take all the suffering upon yourself alone, you should make those also suffer, who have injured you.

Leonato. There you talk logically. Indeed I will do so. My soul tells me that Hero is slandered ; and that Claudio and the prince and all of them, who thus dishonour her, shall be made to know it.

Enter Don Pedro *and* Claudio.

Antonio. Here come the prince and Claudio hastily.

Don Pedro. Good-evening, good-evening.

Claudio. Good-day to both of you.

Leonato. Do you hear, my lords ?

Don Pedro. We are in some haste, Leonato.

Leonato. Some haste, my lord ! well, fare you well, my lord. Are you in such haste now ? Well, it does not matter.

Don Pedro. No, do not quarrel with us, good old man.

Antonio. If he could mend the wrong by quarrelling, some of us would be struck down dead.

Claudio Who wrongs him ?

Leonato. By Mary, you do me a wrong, you hypocrite, you. Never lay your hand on your sword because I never fear you.

Claudio. By Mary, a plague on my hand. If I should give a man of your age any ground to fear it. I say truly that my hand had nothing to do with my sword.

Leonato. Tush, Tush, man ! never sneer and jest at me. I do not speak like a dotard, nor a fool, claiming the usual privilege of an old man to brag of what I did when I was young and what I could do still, if I were not old. I tell you, Claudio, that you have so wronged my innocent child and me that I am forced to put aside the dignity of my age and despite of my grey hair and the ravages of time, I have to challenge you to a manly combat. I again say that you have slandered my innocent child. Your slander has cut her to the heart and she lies buried with her ancestors in a tomb where there never was any slander associated with any one sleeping there except this slander about her, devised by your wickedness.

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Claudio. My villainy ?

Leonato. Thine, Claudio ; thine, I say.

Don Pedro. You say not right, old man.

Leonato. My lord, my lord,
I 'll prove it on his body, if he dare,
Despite his nice fence and his active practice,
His May of youth, and bloom of lustihood.

Claudio. Away ! I will not have to do with you.

Leonato. Canst thou so daff me ? Thou hast kill'd my child :
If thou kills me, boy, thou shalt kill a man.

Antonio. He shall kill two of us, and men indeed : 80
But that's no matter ; let him kill one first ;
Win me and wear me ; let him answer me.
Come follow me, boy ; come, sir boy, come, follow me.
Sir boy, I 'll whip you from your foining fence ;
Nay, as I am gentleman, I will.

Leonato. Brother,—

Antonio. Content yourself. God knows I loved my niece ;
And she is dead, slander'd to death by villains,
That dare as well answer a man indeed
As I dare take a serpent by the tongue.
Boys, apes, braggarts, Jacks, milksops ! 90

Leonato. Brother Antony,—

Antonio. Hold you content. What, man ! I know them, yea,
And what they weigh, even to the utmost scruple :
Scambling, outfacing, fashion-mong'ring boys,
That lie and cog, and flout, deprave and slander,
Go anticly, show outward hideousness,
And speak of half a dozen dangerous words,
How they might hurt their enemies, if they durst ;
And this is all !

Leonato. But, brother Antony,—

Antonio. Come, 't is no matter : 100
Do not you meddle ; let me deal in this.

Don Pedro. Gentlemen both, we will not wake your patience.
My heart is sorry for your daughter's death ;
But on my honour, she was charged with nothing
But what was true, and very full of proof.

Leonato. My lord, my lord,—

Don Pedro. I will not hear you.

Leonato. No ?
Come brother, away. I will be heard.

Antonio. And shall, or some of us will smart for it.

[*Exeunt* Leonato *and* Antonio.

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Claudio. My wickedness.

Leonato. Yours Claudio, I say, yours.

Don Pedro. You do not speak the right, old man.

Leonato. My lord, my lord ! I will prove it on his body, if he dare to fight with me in spite of his skill and active exercise in fencing and in spite of his prime of youth and manhood.

Claudio. Away ! I will have nothing to do with you.

Leonato. Can you put one off, thus ? You have killed my child. If you kill me, boy, you shall kill a man.

Antonio. He shall kill two of us and he shall kill men indeed. But that does not matter. Let him kill one first. Win me and wear me and answer me in a duel. Come follow me, boy, come sir boy, come follow me, sir boy. I will whip you out of your trick in fencing, indeed, as I am a gentleman, I will.

Leonato. Brother.

Antonio. Be silent. God knows that I loved my niece and she is dead being slandered to death by villains. Who is there to meet a man as well as I dare to take a serpent by the tongue—boys, apes, braggarts, knaves, cowards !

Leonato. Brother Antony.

Antonio. Remain queit ! what man ! I know them, yes, and what their worth is : stuffing brazen-faced, foppish boys, who lie, cheat, sneer and practise detraction and slander, who dress up fantastically and put on appearance of formidableness and trot out a new violent words threatening how they might hurt their enemies, if they tried to do so ; and this is all they can do.

Leonato. But, brother Antony.

Antonio Come, it (this anger) does not matter. You should not interfere. Let me deal with this matter.

Don Pedro. Gentlemen, (addressing to both Leonato and Antonio), we will not disturb your patience and provoke your wrath ! I am really grieved at your daughter's death, but on my honuor, she was accused of what she had committed and what had been fully proved.

Leonato. My lord, my lord.

Don Pedro. I will not hear you.

Leonato. No ? come borther, away. I will be heard.

Antonio. And shall, or some of us will suffer this.

[*Exeunt* Leonato *and* Antonio.

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Don Pedro. See, see, here comes the man we went to seek.

Enter Benedick.

Claudio. Now, signior, what news ? 110

Benedick. Good day, my lord.

Don Pedro. Welcome, signior ; you are almost come to part almost a fray.

Claudio. We had like to have had our two noses snapped off with two old men without teeth.

Don Pedro. Leonato and his brother. What thinkst thou ? Had we fought, I doubt we should have been too young for them.

Benedick. In a false quarrel there is no true valour. I came to seek you both. 120

Claudio. We have been up and down to seek thee ; for we are high-proof melancholy, and would fain have it beaten away. Wilt thou use thy wit ?

Benedick. It is in my scabbard ; shall I draw it ?

Don Pedro. Dost thou wear thy wit by thy side ?

Claudio. Never any did so, though very many have been beside their wit. I will bid thee draw, as we do the minstrels ; draw, to pleasure us.

Don Pedro. As I am an honest men, he looks pale. Art thou sick, or angry ? 130

Claudio. What, courage, man ! What though care killed a cat, thou hast mettle enough in thee to kill care.

Benedick. Sir, I shall meet your wit in the career, an you charge it against me. I pray you choose another subject.

Claudio. Nay then, give him another staff : this last was broke cross.

Don Pedro. By this light, he changes more and more : I think he be angry indeed.

Claudio. If he be, he knows how to turn his girdle.

Benedick. Shall I speak a word in your ear ? 140

Claudio. God bless me from a challenge !

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Don Pedro. See, see. here comes the man whom we went to seek.

Enter Benedick.

Claudio. Now signior, what is the news ?

Benedick. Good-day, my lord.

Don Pedro. Welcome signior, you are almost come in time to intervene in what was almost a fight.

Claudio. We appeared to have our noses cut off by two old men without teeth.

Don Pedro. Leonato and his brother—what do you think of it ? Had we fought with them, I fear we should have been too young for them.

Benedick. In false quarrel, there is no true valour. I came to seek you both.

Claudio. We have been up and down to seek you, for we have sadness in a high degree and would fain have it beaten away (driven away). Will you use your wit ?

Benedick. It is in my scabbard : shall I draw it out ?

Don Pedro. Do you wear your wit by your side like this ?

Claudio. No one ever did so though very many have been out of wit. Whether you wear your wit by your side or you are beside your wit, you may please draw, as musicians draw, to please us. (Here is a pun or the word draw——draw, in the first sense, is used for drawing out of the scabbard and, in the second, drawing out a tune).

Don Pedro. In all seriousness, I say as an honest man, that he looks pale. Are you sick or angry.

Claudio. What, courage, man ! What though care killed a cat ? You have enough courage in you to kill care.

Benedick. I shall have some other occasion to answer your wit and if you want me to answer, I request you to please choose other subject.

Claudio. Well, then, give him another lance, because the last one has broken.

Don Pedro. By this light, he grows more pale with anger. I think he is angry indeed.

Claudio. If he be angry, he knows best how to change his humour and offer a challenge. [The word girdle has been used in two senses—(1) change his humour, and (2) offer a challenge.]

Benedick. Shall I speak a word in your ear ?

Claudio. God save me from a challenge.

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Benedick. [*Aside to* Claudio.] You are a villain, I jest not, I will make it good how you dare, with what you dare, and when you dare. Do me right, or I will protest your cowardice : you have killed a sweet lady, and her death shall fall heavy on you. Let me hear from you.

Claudio. Well, I will meet you, so I may have good cheer.

Don Pedro. What ! a feast, a feast ?

Claudio. I' faith, I thank him ; he hath bid me to a calf's-head and a capon, the which if I do not carve most curiously, say my knife's naught. Shall I not find a woodcock too ? 150

Benedick. Sir, your wit ambles well ; it goes easily.

Don Pedro. I 'll tell thee how Beatrice praised thy wit the other day. I said, thou hadest a fine wit. 'True' said she, 'a fine little one.' 'No,' said, I, 'a great wit.' 'Right,' says she, 'a great gross one'. 'Nay', said I, 'a good wit.' 'Just,' said she, 'it hurts nobody'. 'Nay'. said I, 'the gentleman is wise.' 'Certain', said she, 'a wise gentleman.' 'Nay,' said I, 'he hath the tongues'. 'That I believe,' said she, 'for he swore a thing to me on Monday night, which he forswore on Tuesday morning : there's a double tongue ; there's two tongues.' Thus did she, an hour together, trans-shape my particular virtuses ; yet at last she concluded with a sigh, thou wast the properst man in Italy. 160

Claudio. For the which she wept heartily and said she cared not.

Don Pedro. Yea, that she did ; but yet, for all that, an if she did not hate him deadly, she would love him dearly. The old man's daughter told us all.

Claudio. All, all ; and moreover, God saw him when he was hid in the garden. 170

Don Pedro. But when shall we set the savage bull's horns on the sensible Benedick's head ?

Claudio. Yea, and text underneath, 'Here dwells Benedick the married man !'

Benedick. Fare you well, boy : you know my mind, I will leave you now to your gossip-like humour : you break jests as braggarts do their blades, which, God be thanked, hurt not. My lord, for your many courtesies I thank you : I must discontinue your company. Your brother the bastard is fled from Messina : you have, among you, killed a sweet and innocent lady. For my Lord Lack-beard there, he and I shall meet ; and till then peace be with him. 180 [*Exit.*

Don Pedro. He is in earnest.

Claudio. In most profound earnest ; and I 'll warrant you, for the love of Beatrice.

Don Pedro. And hath challenged thee ?

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Benedick. You are a villain [*Aside to Claudio*]. I do not jest, I will stand up to it if you accept the challenge and see to what extent you will go and give me satisfaction, or I will publish your cowardice. You have killed a sweet lady and you should pay dearly for it. Let me hear from you.

Claudio. Well, I will meet you. I may have good entertainment.

Don Pedro. What ! a feast, a feast.

Claudio. Indeed, I thank him. He has invited me to a dish of calf's-head and a capon, and if I do not carve most skilfully, then you may say that my knife is no good : shall I not find a woodcock too. (Woodcock is a reference to Benedick indicating his conceit).

Benedick. Sir, your wit seems to have an easy pace.

Don Pedro. I will tell you how Beatrice praised your wit the other day. I said that you had a fine wit. "True", she says, "a mere triffle of wit." "No", said I, "a great wit." Right said she, "a dull one". "No", said I, "good wit". "Exactly so", she said, "it hurts no body". "No", said I, "the gentleman is wise". "Certainly," said she, "a wise gentleman". "No", said I, "he has the tongues that is he knows the language". "That, I believe", said she, "for he swore a thing to me on Monday night, which he contradicted on Tuesday morning—he has a double tongue ; there are two tongues." In this way, she, for the whole hour, caricatured your particular virtues, yet at last she concluded with a sigh that you were the handsomest man in Italy.

Claudio. For this fact, she wept heartily and said that she did not care.

Don Pedro. Yes, that she did, but yet in site of all that, if she did not hate him extremely, she should love him dearly. The old man's daughter (Leonato's daughter) told us everything.

Claudio. All this, and moreover, God saw him when he was hid in the garden.

Don Pedro. But when shall we set the savage bull's horns on the sensible head of Benedick.

Claudio. Yes, and set the inscription beneath. "Here dwells Benedick, the married man !"

Benedick. Farewell, boy, you know my mind. I will leave you now to your gossip-like humour. You break jests as braggarts do their swords (to show that they have fought bravely, but god be thanked that there is none hurt. My lord, I thank you for your many courtesies ; I must discontinue your company. Your brother, the bastard, has fled from Messina : you have between you killed a sweet innocent lady. As regards my Lord Lack-beard, he and I shall meet and till then peace be with him. [*Exit*.

Don Pedro. He is serious.

Claudio. Very serious, indeed, and I assure you, he is so for the love of Beatrice.

Don Pedro. And, has he challenged you ?

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Claudio. Most sincerely.

Don Pedro. What a pretty thing man is when he goes in his doublet and hose and leaves off his wit !

Claudio. He is then a giant to an ape ; but then is an ape 190
a doctor to such a man.

Don Pedro. But soft you ; let me be : pluck up, my heart, and be sad ! Did he not say my brother was fled ?

Enter Dogberry, *and the* Watch, *with*
Conrade *and* Borachio.

Dogberry. Come you, sir : if justice cannot tame you she shall ne'er weigh more reasons in her balance. Nay, an you be a cursing hypocrite once, you must be looked to.

Don Pedro. How now ! two of my brother's men bound ? Borachio one ?

Claudio. Hearken after their offence, my lord.

Don Pedro. Officers, what offence have these men done ? 200

Dogberry. Marry, sir, they have committed false report ; moreover, they have spoken untruths ; secondarily, they are slanders ; sixth and lastly, they have belied a lady ; thirdly, they have verified unjust things ; and, to conclude, they are lying knaves.

Don Pedro. First, I ask thee what they have done ; thirdly I ask thee what's their offence : sixth and lastly, why they are committed, and to conclude, what you lay to their charge.

Claudio. Rightly reasoned, and in his own division ; and by my troth, there's one meaning well suited. 210

Don Pedro. Who have you offended, masters, that you are thus bound to your answer ? This learned constable is too cunning to be understood. What's your offence ?

Borachio. Sweet prince, let me go no further to mine answer ; do you hear me, and let this count kill me. I have deceived even your very eyes : what your wisdom could not discover, these shallow fools have brought to light ; who in the night overheard me confessing to this man how Don John, your brother, incensed me to slander the Lady Hero ; how you were brought into the orchard and saw me court 220
Margaret in Hero's garments : how you disgraced her, when you should marry her. My villainy they have upon record ; which I had rather seal with my death than repeat over to my shame. The lady is dead upon mine and my master's false accusation ; and, briefly, I desire nothing but the reward of a villain.

Don Pedro. Runs not this speech like iron through your blood ?

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Claudio. Most sincerely.

Don Pedro. What a strange creature man is ! When he covers himself with clothes and divests himself of an understanding.

Claudio. He is then a giant in comparison to an ape, but an ape is as a learned doctor in comparison to him.

Don Pedro. Be quiet, do not disturb me, take courage my heart and be serious ? Did he not say that my brother had fled ?

Enter Dogberry, Verges, *and the* Watch, *with* Conrade *and* Borachio.

Dogberry. Come on, sir, if justice cannot teach you, she will never weigh more reason in your balance and, indeed, you will be a swearing hypocrite now and must be watched.

Don Pedro. How is it that two of my brother's men are bound ? Borachio is one of them.

Claudio. Listen to their offence, my lord.

Don Pedro. Officers, what offence have these men done ?

Dogberry. By Mary, sir, they have committed false report. Moreover, they have spoken untruths ; secondly, they are slanders ; sixth and lastly, they have belied (told a lie about) a lady ; thirdly, they have confirmed false things ; and to conclude, they are lying knaves.

Don Pedro. Firstly, I ask you what have they done, thirdly, I ask you what is their offence, sixth and lastly, why they have been put up for trial, and to conclude, what do you accuse them of.

Claudio. Very righty put and in his own terms, and, indeed, there is only one meaning put into many different ways.

Don Pedro. Whom have you offended friends that you have thus rendered yourself liable to give an account. The learned constable is too clever to be understood. What is your offence ?

Borachio. Sweet prince, let me waste no time in giving my answer. You hear me and let this Count kill me. I have deceived your very eyes. What your wisdom could not detect these unthinking fools found out, when they watched at night and overheard me confessing to this fellow (Conrade) how your brother, Don John, instigated me to slander the Lady Hero, how you were brought into the garden and saw me court Margaret in Hero's garments, and how you intended to disgrace her when you should marry her. They have recorded my villainy and I would rather confirm my words with death than add to my scheme and repeating them. The lady is dead because of my master's false accusation, and, in short, I desire nothing but the reward of villain.

Don Pedro. Does not this speech stab into your heart ?

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Claudio. I have drunk poison whiles he utter'd it.

Don Pedro. But did my brother set thee on to this ? 230

Borachio. Yea ; and paid me richly for the practice of it.

Don Pedro. He is composed and framed of treachery :
And fled he is upon this villainy.

Claudio. Sweet Hero ! now thy image doth appear
In the rare semblance that I loved it first.

Dogberry. Come, bring away the plaintiffs : by this time our sexton hath reformed Signior Leonato of the matter. And, masters, do not forget to specify, when time and place shall serve, that I am an ass.

Verges. Hero, here comes. Master Signior Leonato and 240
the sexton too.

Re-enter Leonato, Antonio *and the* Sexton.

Leonato. Which is the villain ? Let me see his eyes,
That when I note another man like him,
I may avoid him : which of these is he ?

Borachio. If you would know your wronger, look on me.

Leonato. Art thou the slave that with thy breath hast kill'd
Mine innocent child ?

Borachio. Yea, even I alone.

Leonato. No, not so, villain, thou beliest thyself :
Here stand a pair of honourable men ;
A third is fled, that had a hand in it 250
I thank you, princes, for my daughter's death :
Record it with your high and worthy deeds.
'T was bravely done, if you bethink you of it.

Claudio. I know not how to pray your patience ;
Yet I must speak. Choose your revenge yourself ;
Impose me to what penance your invention
Can lay upon my sin ; yet sinn'd I not
But in mistaking.

Don Pedro. By my soul, nor I ;
And yet, to satisfy this good old man,
I would bend under any heavy weight 260
That he 'll enjoin me to.

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Claudio. I have drunk poison while he uttered it.

Don Pedro. But did my brother incite you to this ?

Borachio. Yes, he paid me liberally for carrying it out.

Don Pedro. He is all composed of treachery, and he has run away as a result of this villainy.

Claudio. Sweet Hero, now your image appears in the beautiful shape that I first loved.

Dogberry. Come, bring away the plaintiffs. By this time, our Sexton must have informed Signior Leonato of the matter, and masters do not forget to state particularly in due time and place that I have been called an ass.

Verges. Here comes Master Signior Leonato and the Sexton too.

Re-enter Leonato, Antonio *and the* Sexton.

Leonato. Who is the villain ? Let me see his eyes so that when I see another man like him, I may avoid him. Which of these is he ?

Borachio. If you want to know the man, who has wronged you, look at me.

Leonato. Are you the slave who with your breath of slander has killed my innocent child ?

Borachio. Yes, I alone.

Leonato. No, it does not appear to be so. You falsely accuse yourself in taking all the blame upon you. Here stand a pair of gentlemen, (who are also involved in this) and the third, who had a hand in it, has fled. I thank you princes, for my daughter's death. Record it along with your high or worthy deeds. It was bravely done if you think about it.

Claudio. I do not know how to beg your patience, yet I must speak. You may choose what form of revenge you like to impose upon me. Whatever penance you can device to punish me sin you may, but my only sin was that I made a mistake.

Don Pedro. By my soul, I was also guilty of the same, and to satisfy this good old man, I would submit to any heavy penance that he will inflict upon me.

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Leonato. I cannot bid you bid me daughter live ;
That were impossible : but, I pray you both,
Possess the people in Messina here
How innocent she died ; and, if your love
Can labour aught in sad invention,
Hang her an epitaph upon her tomb,
And sing it to her bones : sing it to-night.
To-morrow morning come you to my house,
And since you could not be my son-in-law, 270
Be yet my nephew. My brother hath a daughter,
Almost the copy of my child that's dead,
And she alone is heir to both of us :
Give her the right you should have given her cousin,
And so dies my revenge.

Claudio. O noble sir !
Your over-kindness doth wring tears from me.
I do embrace your offer ; and dispose
For henceforth of poor Claudio.

Leonato. To-morrow then I will expect your coming
To-night I take my leave. This naughty man 280
Shall face to face be brought to Margaret,
Who, I believe, was pack'd in all this wrong,
Hired to it by your brother.

Borachio. No, by my soul, she was not,
Nor knew not what she did when she spoke to me,
But always hath been just and virtuous
In any thing that I do know by her.

Dogberry. Moreover, sir, which indeed is not under white and black, this plaintiff here, the offender, did call me ass : I beseech you, let it be remembered in his punishment ; and also, the watch heard them talk of one deformed ; they say 290 he wears a key in his ear and a lock hanging by it, and borrow money in God's name : the which he hath used so long and never paid, that now men grow hard-hearted, and will lend nothing for God's sake. Pray you, examine him upon that point.

Leonato. I thank thee for thy care and honest pains.

Dogberry. Your worship speaks like a most thankful and reverend youth, and I praise God for you.

Leonato. There 's for thy pains.

Dogberry. God save the foundation ! 300

Leonato. Go, I discharge thee of thy prisoner and I thank thee.

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Leonato. I cannot ask you to restore my daughter to life; that would be impossible. But I pray you both that you make known to the people of Messina how innocent Hero died, and if your love spend itself in writing a sad verse, hang an epitaph upon her tomb and sing it in her honour tonight. Tomorrow morning you come to my house, and since you could not be my son-in-law, be yet my naphew. My brother has a daughter, who is almost the image of my dead child and she alone is heir to both of us. Give her the right you should have given her cousin, and so shall die my revenge.

Claudio. O noble, sir, your excess of kindness draws tears from me. I certainly accept your offer, and from now onwards I am entirely at your disposal.

Leonato. To-morrow then, I will expect your coming. Tonight I take leave of you. This wicked man will be brought before Margaret face to face, who was, I believe, involved in all this wicked plot, being hired to join it by your brother.

Borachio. No, by my soul, she was not, nor did she know what did she do when she spoke to me, but has always been just and virtuous in anything that I know about her.

Dogberry. Moreover, sir, this indeed is not set down in writing. This plaintiff here, (the offender,) called me an ass. I request you that this fact may also be borne in mind while awarding punishment to him, also, the watch heard them talk of one Deformed, they say he wears a key in his ear and a lock hanging by it, and borrows money in God's name, which he has used so long and never repaid, that now men grow hard-hearted and will lend nothing for God's sake, to him. I pray you to examine him on that point also.

Leonato. I thank thee for thy care and honest pains.

Dogberry. Your worship speaks like a most thankful and revered youth and I praise God for you.

Leonato. Take this for your trouble.

Dogberry. God save the institution.

Leonato. Go, I relieve you of your prisoner and I thank you.

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Dogberry. I leave an arrant knave with your worship; which I beseech your worship to correct yourself for the example of others. God keep your worship! I wish your worship well: God restore you to health! I humbly give you leave to depart, and if a merry meeting may be wished, God prohibit it! come, neighbour. [*Exeunt* Dogberry *and* Verges.

Leonato. Until to-morrow morning, lords, farewell.

Antonio. Farewell, my lords: we took for you to-morrow. 310

Don Pedro. We will not fail.

Claudio. To-night I 'll mourn with Hero.

[*Exeunt* Don Pedro *and* Claudio.

Leonato. [*To the* Watch.] Bring you these fellows on. We 'll talk with Margaret,
How her acquaintance grew with this lewd fellow. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II. Leonato's *Garden.*

Enter Benedick *and* Margaret, *meeting.*

Benedick. Pray thee, sweet Mistress Margaret, deserve well at my hands by helping me to the speech of Beatrice.

Margaret. Will you then write me a sonnet in praise of my beauty?

Benedick. In so high a style, Margaret, that no man living shall come over it; for in most comely truth thou deservest it.

Margaret. To have no man come over me! Why, shall I always keep below stairs?

Benedick. Thy wit is as quick as the greyhound's mouth; it catches. 10

Margaret. And yours as blunt as the fencer's foils, which hit, but hurt not.

Benedick. A most manly wit, Margaret; it will not hurt a women; and so, I pray thee, call Beatrice. I give thee the bucklers.

Margaret. Give us the swords, we have bucklers of our own.

Benedick. If you use them, Margaret, you must put in the pikes with a voice, and they are dangerous weapons for maids.

Margaret. Well, I will call Beatrice to you, who I think hath legs. 20

Benedick. And therefore will come. [*Exit* Margaret.

The God of love,
That sits above,
And knows me, and knows me,
How pitful I deserve,—

I mean in singing; but in loving, Leander the good swimmer, Troilus the first employer of pandars, and a whole book ful of these quondam carpet-mongers, whose names yet run smoothly in

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Dogberry. I leave a confirmed knave with your worship, whom I beseech your worship to chastise yourself, as a warning to others. God keep your worship, I wish your worship well, God restore you to health. I humbly give you leave to go and if a meeting (between us) is possible, may God prohibit (grant) it! (*To* Verges) Come neighbour. [*Exeunt* Dogberry *and* Verges.

Leonato. Until tomorrow morning, lords, farewell.

Antonio. Farewell, my lords, we look for you tomorrow.

Don Pedro. We will not fail.

Claudio. Tonight, I will mourn with Hero.

[*Exeunt* Don Pedro *and* Claudio.

Leonato. [*To the* Watch] Bring these fellows on. We shall speak with Margaret to find out how her friendship with this low fellow began. [*Exeunt*.

SCENE II. Leonato's *Garden*.

Enter Benedick *and* Margaret, *meeting*.

Benedick. Pray you, sweet Mistress Margaret. You earn my gratitude by helping me to have a word with Beatrice.

Margaret. Will you then write a sonnet in the praise of my beauty.

Benedick. In so high a style, Margaret, that no living man shall excell it, for in truth, you deserve it.

Margaret. To have no man come over (marry) me! why I shall always remain below the stairs, *i.e.*, shall remain a servant and never be a mistress?

Benedick. Your wit is as quick as the greyhound's mouth. It hits as quickly as the greyhound catches its victim.

Margaret. And yours is as blunt as the fencer's blunt sword, which hits but does not hurt.

Benedick. A most manly wit, Margaret. It will not hurt a woman. So I request you to call Beatrice. I accept my defeat.

Margaret. Give us the swords as we have the bucklers of our own.

Benedick. If you use them Margaret, you must put in the central spikes with a screw and they are dangerous weapons for maids.

Margaret. Well, I will call Beatrice to you, who, I think has legs to come here. [*Exit* Margaret.

Benedick. And therefore will come.

[*He sings*.]

The God of love who sits above knows fully well how little I deserve, I mean in singing but in loving Leander, the good swimmer, Troilus the first employer of pandars and a whole book full of these

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the even road of a blank verse, why they were never so truly turned over and over as my poor self in love. Marry I cannot show it in rhyme ; I have tried ; I can find out no rhyme to 'lady' but 'baby', in innocent rhyme ; for 'scorn', 'horn', a hard rhyme ; for 'school', 'fool', a babbling rhyme ; very ominous endings. No, I was not born under a rhyming planet, nor I cannot woo in festival terms. 30

Enter Beatrice.

Sweet Beatrice, would'st thou come when I called thee ?

Beatrice. Yes, Signior ; and depart when you bid me.

Benedick. O ! stay but till then.

Beatrice. 'Then' is spoken ; fare you well now : and yet, ere I go, let me go with that I came ; which is, with knowing what hath passed between you and Claudio. 40

Benedick. Only foul words ; and thereupon I will kiss thee.

Beatrice. Foul words is but foul wind, and foul wind is but foul breath, and foul breath is noisome ; therefore I will depart unkissed.

Benedick. Thou hast frighted the word out of his right sense, so forcible is thy wit. But I must tell thee plainly, Claudio undergoes my challenge, and either I must shortly hear from him, or I will subscribe him a coward. And, I pray thee now, tell me, for which of my bad parts didst thou first fall in love with me ? 50

Beatrice. For them all together ; which maintained so politic a state of evil that they will not admit any good part to intermingle with them. But for which of my good parts did you first suffer love for me.

Benedick. Suffer love ! a good epithet. I do suffer love, indeed, for I love thee against my will.

Beatrice. In spite of your heart, I think ; alas ! poor heart. If you spite it for my sake, I will spite it for yours ; for I will never love that which my friend hates. 60

Benedick. Thou and I are too wise to woo peaceably.

Beatrice. It appears not in this confession : there's not one wise man among twenty that will praise himself.

Benedick. An old, an old instance, Beatrice, that loved in the time of good neighbours. If a man do not erect in this age his own tomb ere he dies, he shall live no longer in monument than the bell rings and the window weeps.

Beatrice. And how long is that, think you ?

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quondam (former) carpet-knights whose names yet sound well in melodious blank verse, why they were never so truly tossed in love as myself, by Mary, I cannot show it in time : I have tried I can find no rhyme to 'lady' except 'baby', an innocent rhyme : for 'scorn', 'horn', a hard rhyme ; for 'school', 'fool' a foolish rhyme : very inauspicious endings. No, I was not born under a rhyming planet and I cannot make love in fine language.

Enter Beatrice.

Sweet Beatrice, would you come when I called you ?

Beatrice. Yes, Signior, and go when you bid me to go.

Benedick. Oh, stay then till I ask you to go.

Beatrice. 'Then' is already spoken, farewell to you now, and yet before I go let me go with what I came for which is knowledge of what has happened between you and Claudio.

Benedick. Only foul words and thereupon, I will kiss you.

Beatrice. Foul words are but foul wind, and foul wind is but foul breath, and foul Breath is unpleasant. Therefore, I will go away unkissed.

Benedick. You have feared the word out of its sense. Your wit is so forceful, but I must tell you plainly that Claudio has received my challenge and either I must shortly hear from him or I will proclaim, under signatures, that he is a coward. I pray you now tell me for which of my demerits did you first fall in love with me ?

Beatrice. For them all together, which maintained so compact a body that they would not allow anything good to mix with them. But for which of my good parts did you first suffer love for me.

Benedick. Suffer love ! a good phrase. I do suffer love indeed, for I love you against my will.

Beatrice. To spite your heart, I think, alas, poor heart. If you spit your heart by loving me, I shall spite it for your sake, for I will never love what my friend hates.

Benedick. You and I are too wise to woo smoothly.

Beatrice. If your wisdom does not appear in this confession, there is not one wise man among twenty who will praise himself.

Benedick. An old, old proverb that held good in the old days when all men were friendly. In this age, if a man does not erect his own tomb before he dies, he shall not be remembered longer than the tolling of the bell at his burial or the weeping of his widow.

Beatrice. And how long is that, in your opinion ?

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Benedick. Question : why, an hour in clamour and a quarter in rheum ; therefore is it most expendient for the wise, if Don Worm, his conscience, find no impediment to the contrary, to be the trumpet of his own virtues, as I am to myself. So much for praising my self, who, I myself will bear witness, is praiseworthy. And now tell me, how doth your cousin ? 70

Beatrice. Very ill.

Benedick. And how do you ?

Benedick. Very ill too.

Benedick. Serve God, love me, and mend. There will I leave you too, for here comes one in haste. 80

Enter Ursula.

Ursula. Madam, you must come to your uncle. Yonder's old coil at home, it is proved my Lady Hero hath been falsely accused, the prince and Claudio mightily abused ; and Don John is the author of all, who is fled and gone. Will you come presently ?

Beatrice. Will you go hear this news, signior ?

Benedick. I will live in thy heart, die in thy lap, and be buried in thy eyes ; and moreover, I will go with thee to thy uncle's.

[*Exeunt.* 90

SCENE III. *The Inside of a Church.*

Enter Don Pedro, Claudio *and* Attendants, *with music and tapers.*

Claudio. Is this the monument of Leonato ?

A Lord. It is, my lord.

Claudio. [*Reads from a scroll.*

Done to death by slanderous tongues
Was the Hero that here lies :
Death, in guerdon of her wrongs,
Gives her fame which never dies
So the life that died with shame
Lives in death with glorious fame.

Hang thou there upon the tomb.
Praising her when I am dumb, 10
Now, music, sound, and sing your solemn hymen.

[*Song.*]

Pardon goddess of the night.
Those that slew thy virgin knight ;
For the which, with songs of woe
Round about her tomb they go.

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Benedick. That is the question : Well, why an hour in noisy lamentation and a quarter of an hour in tears : therefore, it is most advisable for a wise man, if the worm of his conscience has no objection to it, to be proclaimer of his own virtues, just as I am one to be praised, and now tell me how your cousin is ?

Beatrice. Very ill.

Benedick. And, how are you ?

Beatrice. Very ill too.

Benedick. Serve God, love me, and recover from your illness, with that I too will leave you. Some one comes in haste.

Enter Ursula.

Ursula. Madam, you must come to your uncle. There is great confusion beyond. It has been proved my Lady Hero had been falsely accused, the prince and Claudio were greatly deceived and that Don John is the mischief-doer, who has fled and gone. Will you come immediately ?

Beatrice. Will you come and hear this news, Signior ?

Benedick. I wish to live in your heart, die in your lap and be buried in your eyes, and moreover I will go with you to your uncle's house. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III. *The Inside of a Church.*

Enter Don Pedro, Claudio *and* Attendents *with music and tapers.*

Claudio. Is this the monument of Leonato ?

A Lord. It is, my lord.

Claudio. [*Reads from a scroll.*

[*Epitaph*]

Hero, who lies here was killed by slanderous tongues. Death, in compensation, the slander done to her, gives her death less fame, so the living one who died in shame lives after death in glorious fame.
Remain there suspended upon the tomb, praising her when I am silent.
Now let musicians begin and sing their solemn praise.

[*Song.*]

Goddess of night, pardon those who slew your virgin servant, for which sin they go round about her tomb singing songs of woe ;

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Midnight assist our moan ;
Help us to sigh and groan,
Heavily, heavily :
Graves, yawn and yield your dead.
Till death be uttered, 20
Heavily, heavily.

Claudio. Now, unto thy bones good night !
Yearly will I do this rite.

Don Pedro. Good morrow, masters : put your torches out.
The wolves have prey'd ; and look, the gentle day,
Before the wheels of phoebus, round about
Dapples the drowsy east with spots of grey.
Thanks to you all, and leave us ; fare you well.

Claudio. Good morrow, master ; each his several way.

Don Pedro. Come, let us hence, and put on other weeds ; 30
And then to Leonato's we will go.

Claudio. And Hymen now with luckier issue speed's
Than this for whom we render'd up this woe !
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV. *A Room in* Leonato's *House.*

Enter Leonato, Antonio, Benedick, Beatrice, Margaret, Ursula, Friar Francis' *and* Hero.

Friar. Did I not tell you she was innocent ?

Leonato. So are the prince and Claudio, who accused her,
Upon the error that you heard debated :
But Margaret was in some fault for this,
Although against her will, as it appears
In the true course of all question.

Antonio. Well, I am glad that all things sorts so well.

Benedick. And so am I, being else by faith enforced
To call young Claudio to a reckoning for it.

Leonato. Well, daughter, and you gentlewomen all, 10
Withdraw into a chamber yourselves,
And when I send for you, come hither mask'd :
The prince and Claudio promis'd by this hour
To visit me. [*Exeunt Ladies.*
You know your office, brother :
You must be father to your brother's daughter,
And give her to young Claudio.

Antonio. Which I will do with confirm'd countenance.

Benedick. Friar, I must entreat your pains, I think.

Friar. To do what, signior ?

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Midnight, assist in our mourning and in giving expression to our deep sorrow in sighs and groans. Graves, open and let forth the shades of the dead, till death be commemorated in song.

Claudio. Now good-night to your remains ! Every year I will perform this ceremony.

Don Pedro. Good-morning, friends. Put out your torches, the wolves have now captured their prey and behold how the gentle dawn advancing before the chariot wheels of the sun-god covers the slumbering eastern sky with patches of grey. I thank you all and request you to leave us. Farewell.

Claudio. Good-morning, masters. Let each man go his own way.

Don Pedro. Let us go away, and change our clothes, and then we shall go to Leonato's house.

Claudio. And may the god of marriage bless us with more fortunate result than happened to her whom we mourned.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV. *A Room in* Leonato's *House.*

Enter Leonato, Antonio, Benedick, Beatrice, Margaret, Ursula, Friar Francis, *and* Hero.

Friar. Did I not tell you that she was innocent ?

Leonato. So are the prince and Claudio, who accused her as a result of a mistake that you have heard discussed, but Margaret was partly to blame for this : although it appeared in the course of an enquiry that she did all this unintentionally.

Antonio. Well, I am glad that things have ended so happily.

Benedick. And so am I, since otherwise I would be bound by my pledge to call young Claudio to take an account from him to be able to take revenge upon him.

Leonato. Well, daughter, and you ladies all should go into chamber and when I send for you, come hither masked. The prince and Claudio promised to visit me about this time. [*Exeunt Ladies.* You know your duty, brother, you must act as father to your brother's daughter and give her to young Claudio.

Antonio. That I will do with natural face.

Benedick. Friar, I must entreat your services, I think,

Friar. To do what signior ?

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Benedick. To bind me, or undo me ; one of them. 20
Signior Leonato, truth it is, good signior,
Your niece regards me with an eye of favour.

Leonato. That eye my daughter lent her : 't is most true.

Benedick. And I do with an eye of love requite her.

Leonato. The sight whereof I think you had from me,
From Claudio, and the prince. But what 's your will ?

Benedick. Your answer, sir, is enigmatical :
But, for my will, my will is your good will
May stand with ours, this day to be conjoin'd
In the state of honourable marriage ; 30
In which good Friar I shall desire your help.

Leonato. My heart is with your liking.

Friar. And my help.
Here come the prince and Claudio.

Enter Don Pedro *and* Claudio, *with* Attendants.

Don Pedro. Good morrow to this fair assembly.

Leonato. Good morrow, prince ; good morrow, Claudio :
We here attend you. Are you yet determined
To-day to marry with my brother's daughter ?

Claudio. I 'll hold my mind, were she an Ethiope.

Leonato. Call her forth, brother : here 's the friar ready.
[*Exit* Antonio.

Don Pedro. Good morrow, Benedick. Why, what 's the matter ? 40
That you have such a February face,
So full of frost, of storm and cloudiness.

Claudio. I think he thinks upon the savage bull.
Tush ! fear not, man, we 'll tip thy horns with gold,
And all Europa shall rejoice at thee,
As once Europa did at lusty Jove,
When he would play the noble beast in love.

Benedick. Bull Jove, sir, had an amiable low ;
And some such strange bull leap'd your father's cow,
And got a calf in that same noble feat, 50
Much like to you, for you have just his bleat.

Re-enter Antonio, *with* Hero, Beatrice, Margaret, Ursula, *masked.*

Claudio. For this I owe you ; here comes other reckonings.
Which is the lady I must seize upon ?

Antonio. This same is she, and I do give you her.

Claudio. Why, then she's mine. Sweet, let me see your face.

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Benedick. To bind me in marriage or undo me in love—one of the two things. Signior Leonato, the fact is, good signior, your niece loves me.

Leonato. That it is due to my daughter is quite true.

Benedick. And, I also love her in return.

Leonato. For this, I think you are indebted to me, and Claudio and the prince, but what is your will ?

Benedick. Your answer is, sir, enigmatical, but as regards my will, my will is that your wishes agreeing with ours we may today be united in honourable marriage, in which, good Friar, I shall require your help.

Leonato. I heartily approve your wish.

Friar. And my help is always heartily given. Here come the prince and Claudio.

Enter Don Pedro *and* Claudio, *with* Attendants.

Don Pedro. Good morning to this fair assembly.

Leonato. Good morning prince, good morning Claudio. We are waiting for you here. Are you still determined to marry my brother's daughter today ?

Claudio. I will hold my mind (*i.e.*, will not change my mind) even if she were as unattractive as an Ethiopian.

Leonato. Call her forth brother, here is the friar ready.

[*Exit* Antonio.

Don Pedro. Good morning Benedick, why, what is the matter ? Why do you have a February face, which seems to have been beaten by frost, storm and cloud.

Claudio. I think he thinks upon the savage bull. Tush ! fear not man, we will tip your horns with gold and all Europe shall rejoice at you, as once Europa (a maiden) did at strong Jove when he assumed the form of a noble bull out of love for her.

Benedick. But Jove, as a bull, had an amiable voice, and some such strange bull leapt over your father's cow and got a calf in that very noble feat and the calf made a bleat in the same manner as you did.

Re-enter Antonio *with* Hero, Beatrice, Margaret, *and* Ursula, *masked.*

Claudio. For this remark I owe you an answer. Here are other bills to be paid (other matters to be attended to). Who is the lady whom I must take for myself ?

Antonio. This same person is she and I do give her to you.

Claudio. Why, then she is mine. Sweet, let me see your face,

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Leonato. No, that you shall not, till you take her hand.
Before this friar, and swear to marry her.

Claudio. Give me your hand : before this holy friar,
I am your husband, if you like of me.

Hero. And when I lived, I was your other wife : 60
[*Unmasking.*
And when you loved, you were my other husband.

Claudio. Another Hero.

Hero. Nothing certainer :
One Hero died defiled, but I do live,
And, surely as I live, I am a maid.

Don Pedro. The former Hero ! Hero that is dead !

Leonato. She died, my lord, but whiles her slander lived.

Friar. All this amazement can I qualify :
When after that the holy rites are ended,
I 'll tell you largely of fair Hero's death ; 70
Meantime, let wonder seem familiar,
And to the chapel let us presently.

Benedick. Soft and fair, friar. Which is Beatrice ?

Beatrice: I answer to that name.
[*Unmasking.*
What is your will ?

Benedick. Do not you love me ?

Beatrice. Why, no : no more than reason.

Benedick. Why then, your uncle and the prince and Claudio.
Have been deceived ; they swore you did.

Beatrice. Do you love me ?

Benedick. Troth, no ; no more than reason.

Beatrice. Why then, my cousin, Margaret, and Ursula,
Are much deceived ; for they did swear you did. 80

Benedick. They swore that you were almost sick for me.

Beatrice. They swore that you were well-nigh dead for me.

Benedick. 'T is no such matter. Then you do not love me ?

Beatrice. No, truly, but in friendly recompense.

Leonato. Come, cousin, I am sure you love the gentleman.

Claudio. And I'll be sworn upon 't that he loves her ;
For here's a paper written in his hand,
A halting sonnent of his own pure brain,
Fashion'd to Beatrice.

Hero. And here's another
Writ in my cousin's hand, stol'n from her pocket. 90
Containing her affection unto Benedick.

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Leonato. No, that you shall not until you take her hand in the presence of this Friar and swear to marry her.

Claudio. Give me your hand in the presence of this Friar. I am your husband if you like me.

Hero. And when I lived I was your other wife. [*Unmasking.* And when you loved, you loved, you were my other husband.

Claudio. Another Hero.

Hero. Nothing more certain. One Hero died defamed, but I do live and surely as I live, I am a maid.

Don Pedro. The former Hero, that is dead !

Leonato. She was dead, my lord, only as long as her slander lived.

Friar. I can moderate all the amazement. When all the rites of marriage are over, I will tell you at length about fair Hero's death. In the meanwhile, act as if there is nothing strange about it. Let us go to the church presently.

Benedick Wait a minute, Friar. Which is Beatrice ?

Beatrice. [*Unmasking.*] I answer to that name, what is your will ?

Benedick. Do you love me ?

Beatrice. Why no, no more than reason and judgment ?

Benedick. Why then your uncle, and the prince and Claudio have been deceived. They swore that you loved me.

Beatrice. Do you not love me ?

Benedick. Indeed no, no more than reason and judgment.

Beatrice. Why then my cousin, Margaret and Ursula have been deceived, for they did swear that you loved me.

Benedick. They swore that you were almost sick from love for me.

Beatrice. They swore that you were well-night dead for me.

Benedick. It is not the case, do you not love me then ?

Beatrice. No, indeed, except as a friend should return the love of a friend.

Leonato. Come cousin, I am sure that you love the gentleman.

Claudio. And, I am ready to swear that he loves her, for here is a paper written in his hand, an inferior sonnet of his own making, which has been written for Beatrice.

Hero. And, here is another piece of paper stolen from her pocket and which has been written in the handwriting of my cousin, cousin, and which contains her lov e for Benedick.

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Benedick. A miracle ! here's our own hands against our hearts. Come, I will have thee : but, by this light, I take thee for pity.

Beatrice. I would not deny you ; but, this good day, I yield upon great persuasion, and partly to save your life, for I was told you were in a consumption.

Benedick. Peace ! I will stop your mouth. [*Kisses her.*

Don Pedro. How dost thou, Benedick, the married man ?

Benedick. I'll tell thee what, price : a college of wit-crackers cannot flout me out of my humour. Dost thou think I care for a satire or an epigram ? No : if a man will be beaten with brains, a' shall wear nothing handsome about him. In brief, since I do purpose to marry, I will think nothing to any purpose that the world can say against it ; and therefore never flout at me for what I have said against it for man is a giddy thing, and this my conclusion. For thy part, Claudio, I did think to have beaten thee ; but, in that thou are like to be my kinsman, live unbruised, and love my cousin. 100

Claudio. I had well hoped thou would'st have denied Beatrice, that I might have cudgelled thee out of thy single life, to make thee a double-dealer ; which, out of question, thou wilt be, if my cousin do not look exceeding narrowly to thee. 110

Benedick. Come, come, we are friends. Let's have a dance ere we are married, that we may lighten our own hearts and our wives' heels.

Leonato. We 'll have dancing afterward.

Benedick. First, of my word ; therefore play, music ! Prince, thou art sad ; get thee a wife, get thee a wife : there is no staff more reverend than one tipped with horn. 120

Enter a Messenger.

Messenger. My lord, your brother John is ta'en in flight,
And brought with armed men back to Messina.

Benedick. Think not on him till to-morrow : I 'll devise thee brave punishments for him. Strike up, pipers.

[*Dance, Exeunt.*

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Benedick. A miracle ! here is the evidence of our handwritings repudiating our hearts. Come, I will have you, but by this light, I take you out of pity.

Beatrice. I will not refuse you but by this good day, I give myself to you since so much pressure has been brought upon me and partly to save your life, because I was told that you were in a consumption.

Benedick. Silence, I will stop your mouth. [*Kisses her.*

Don Pedro. How are you, Benedick, the married man ?

Benedick. I will tell you what I think of it : a group of merry witty fellow cannot mock me out of my humour. Do you think that I care for a satire or an epigram ? No, if a man will mind being satired, he will not dare to put on even a handsome suit of clothes, (much less to marry a handsome woman). In short, I intend to marry and I will disregard what all the world can say against it ; and so never sneer at me for what I have said against it, for man is a fickle creature and this is my conclusion. For your part, Claudio, I intended to have beaten you, but since you are likely to be my kinsman, live unhurt, and love my cousin.

Claudio. I had well hoped that you would have refused Beatrice so that I would have beaten out of your bachelor life so that you marry and prove false to your wife as you will certainly do if my cousin does not very carefully watch over you.

Benedick. Come, come, we are friends. Let us have a dance before we are married, so that we may lighten our hearts and our wive's heels.

Leonato. We will have the dancing afterwards.

Benedick. We will have dancing first, on my word. Therefore let music start. Prince, you are sad, get a wife, get a wife, there is no staff more respectable than one tipped with horn. (Surely the reference is to the cuckold-horn).

Enter a Messenger.

Messenger. My lord, your brother, Don John, is captured in the course of a flight and brought under armed-guard back to Messina.

Benedick. Do not talk of him till tomorrow. I will devise harsh punishment for him. Strike up music, pipers.

[*Dance. Exeunt.*

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NOTES AND ANNOTATIONS

Act I : Scene I

Summary

The scene opens in Messina before the palace of Leonato, the Governor of the town, who in the presence of his daughter, Hero, and his niece, Beatrice, receives, a messenger, with a letter giving him news of a well-nigh bloodless victory won by Don Pedro of Arragon over his wicked bastard brother, Don John, who had fomented a rebellion against the prince. A young Florentine, named Claudio, had given his services to Don Pedro in his action against his bastard brother 'doing in the figure of a lamb, the feats of a lion'. The work of suppressing the revolt has been affected with very few losses. Besides Don John has become reconciled to his victorious brother after his defeat.

Beatrice, the gay and sprightly niece of Leonato, learns from the messenger that Signior Benedick of Padua, who has given proofs of his ready wit and repartee to her when he passed through Messina earlier, is also accompanying Don Pedro and Claudio.

When Don Pedro and his companions arrive, Leonato receives them with great cordiality and welcomes them with an invitation 'to stay for at least a month' in his house Beatrice and Benedick, now begin exchanging their witty skirmishes. Claudio confesses his love for Hero, daughter of the Governor, to his friend, Benedick, and to the prince Don Pedro. Benedick, the misogynist, does not see any sense in this game of love-making, but Don Pedro promises to help Claudio. He says, he knows they will have revelling that night and that he would assume some disguise and tell the lady he is Claudio and open his heart (since Claudio is a novice in the art of wooing). and capture her attention by the forcible presentation of his tale of love ; and then break with her father and get his consent to the marriage.

Dramatic Importance

Shakespeare's opening scenes are invariably significant in that on them falls the onus of *exposition, i. e.*, the situation, the setting (human and material) or background in which the chief characters operate their interrelations and the *beginning of the action*. The preliminary information about the chief characters is conveyed through a messenger. It is he who tells Leonato and his family about the

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chief characters, the latest development about the wars, the relations already subsisting between the two principal characters of the main subplot, *viz*. Benedick and Beatrice, the impending return of Don Pedro and Benedick. By making use of the stock figure of a *messenger*, Shakespeare avoids a direct address to the audience by an expository 'Prologue' in the regular classical manner, which appeared crude and somewhat inartistic to the dramatist. Besides the timely appearance of a messenger, arising out of the context, seems natural for a dignitary of the rank of Don Pedro, riding ahead of him like a herald, with a letter giving further information about the chief characters. Even the element of tragedy in this romantic comedy inherent in the sullen attitude of Don John which has its culmination in the Repudiation Scene (IV. i)—in which Claudio repudiates Hero before the altar —is suggested in the opening scene which fully explains the situation, discloses sufficient information necessary for understanding it, and starts the action of the play.

NOTES

Stage Direction The opening stage-direction in both the original Quarto text and the Folio, reads—"*Enter Leonato, Governer of Messina, Innogen his wife, Hero his daughter, and Beatrice his niece.*" This character, Innogen, is not mentioned in the play. No allusion is also made to her subsequent death. Perhaps "the poet had in his first plan designed such a character which, on a survey of it, he found would be superfluous and therefore he left it out."—(*Theobald*).

1. **This letter**—borne by the messenger who acts as a kind of herald to Don Pedro, Prince of Arragon. **Don Pedro of Arragon**—This has perhaps a reference to the time, when Alphonso I, King on Sicily, united in his person the two crowns of Sicily and Naples in 1435 and continued to reign till 1458. After this there was another split up when John, the bastard, Prince of the House of Arragon, became the King of Sicily. Most probably Shakespeare borrowed the name of Don John, from John, the bastard prince of Arragon.

3. **By this**—by this time.

4. **Leagues**—league is a measure of road distance usually about three miles.

5. **Action**—fight.

6. **Sort**—rank or gentle blood ; distinction, kind.—(Steevens). **None of name**—not a single person of great distinction.

7-8. **A victory is.....full numbers**—a victory may be considered as doubly great when it is achieved without any loss. **Achiever** —victor.

9. **Bestowed much honour**—*i.e.*, honoured. **A young Florentine** —a young man of Florence.

10-11. **Much deserv'd.....Pedro**—Claudio's exploits in the suppression of the rebellion, fostered by the bastard John, fully deserved to be honoured by Don Pedro, the prince of Arragon.

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who did full justice to the young man's services by requiting them adequately.

11-14. **He hath borne himself.....to tell you how**—Shakespeare presents Claudio as a young and brave man who eminently deserved all the honour conferred on him by the prince. This testimony of the messenger is reinforced by the letter from Don Pedro. Claudio figured as a lamb but performed the feats of a lion, surpassing all sanguine expectations in his actual deeds, which the messenger can hardly describe in appropriate terms.

N. B. '*The figure of a lamb, the feats of a lion*'—a figure of speech ('Euphuism') introduced by Lyly but caricatured by Shakespeare in his ***Love's Labour's Lost***).

13. **Better bettered expectation**—he has gone beyond expectation in needs much farther than you must expect me to give in words.

15. **An uncle**—according to George Sampson, the mention of 'uncle' is superfluous, as no uncle appears in the parallel stories.

15-16. **Very much glad**—very glad.

18-19. **That joy could.....badge of bitterness**—so great was the joy of Claudio's uncle that tears began to trickle down from his eyes. Excess of joy finds natural expression in tears.

19. **Badge of bitterness**—a sign of sorrow. In the times of Edward IV, a badge was a sign of inferior rank. It was fastened to the servant's left arm. **Badge**—distinguishing mark. *Cf. Macbeth* ;

"My plenteous joys,
Wanton in fulness, seek to hide themselves
In drops of sorrow."

Notice this instance of 'Euphuism' representing the artificial and flowery style brought into use in Elisabethan society by Lyly.

22. **Kind overflow of kindness**—natural overflow of tenderness ? (Leonato's trick of Fuphuism).

23-24. **To weep at joy than to joy at weeping**—this again is Leonato's jugglery, and falls in line with the Euphuist's vein. Shakespeare is in love with such forms. *Cf. Hamlet*, I. ii. 65 : "A little more than kin, and less than kind."

25. **Signior Mountanto**—'a term taken from fencing, but used by Beatrice as an ironical description of Benedicks courage and prowess.'—(D) The term means 'an upright blow or thrust'—a nickname ironically chosen by Beatrice for signior Benedick. It is to be observed that Beatrice is the first person to mention the name of Benedick and is very keen to know about his safe return. The words "Signior Mountanto" refer to the swordsmanship of Benedick. Likewise Benedick also confers on Beatrice the titles of 'Dear Lady Disdain' and 'My Lady Tongue'.

29. **What**—who.

31. **As pleasant**—as merry and full of fun and humour.

32. **He set up his bills etc.**—when Benedick was last in Messina, he advertised his merits in the field of love and defied Cupid, the god

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of Love, to do his worst. Her uncle's fool accepted the challenge on behalf of Cupid asking him at the same time to shoot at crows with the cross-bow and bird-bolt for killing them for purposes of the table. **Bills**—advertisements.

N. B. "The expression 'to set up bills' was most commonly used (as here) of the posting of placards by public challengers.—(D.) 'Benedick from a vain conceit of his influence over women, challenged Cupid at *roving*, a particular kind of archery in which *flight* arrows are used. In other words, he challenged him to shoot at hearts. The fool, to ridicule this piece of vanity, in his turn challenged Benedick to shoot at crows with the cross-bow and birdbolt, an inferior kind of archery used by fools, who for obvious reasons were not permitted to shoot with pointed arrows "—(Douce).

32-33. **Challeng'd Cupid at the flight**—Benedick challenged the god of Love to do his worst. **Flight**—long-distance light-feathered arrows.

34. **Subscribed for Cupid**—accepted the challenge on behalf of cupid.

35. **Bird-bolt**—short, thick, blunt arrows without a point, for killing birds.

35-36. **I pray you how mony.....these wars ?**—this is how Beatrice jocosely retorts to the messenger's remark to the effect that Benedick has done good 'service' in the wars. According to her, his valour consists in being a great eater. She pointedly asks, "How many soldiers has he killed and eaten in these wars ? Very few, for he is too much of a coward. —*Cf. Henry V*, III. vii, 99-100.

37. **To eat all of his killing**—because he is such a coward that he will be able to kill none at all.

38. **Tax**—you tend to jeer at him much too freely.

39. **Meet**—equal with you or a good match for you.

41. **Musty victual**—stale fool (usually plural in use) **Holp**—archaic past participle of 'help'.

42. **Valiant trencher-man**—a good eater. A *trencher* is a wooden plate.

43. **Stomach**—notice the play on the word in the sense of 'appetite for a quarrel'.

45. **And a good soldier to a lady etc.**—Beatrice wilfully misunderstands the messenger. A good soldier to a lady who knows nothing of war.

47. **Stuff'd**—full of. If used in this way now-a-days, this word would carry with it something of a ludicrous sense ; but though Beatrice uses it immediately afterwards in a comical way, it is employed by Shakespeare without any such limitation to mean *full of*.—(D.) *Cf. Romeo and Juliet*, III, v. 183, "*Stuff'd* as they say with honourable parts."

49. **A stuff'd man**—a man made up of stuffing like a doll, not a real man but a man of straw, a mere image of man. (*Cf.* Portia's

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estimate of Monsieur Le Bon, "God made him, and therefore let him pass for a man.")

50. **But for the.....all mortal**—Beatrice means, "All men are subject to failings and the particular failing of Benedick is that he is a stuffed man, *i.e.*, not a man of substance but a puppet—a man of straw. But as he is a mortal like the rest of us, his stuffing is quite what your eulogy implies."

N. B. Both Benedick and Beatrice are equally gifted with a very piercing, pungent and voluble wit—the natural flow of a happy nature. This 'merry war' which has gone on between them before the play opens, is on Beatrice's side a mask for her *emotion*. She is no genuine misogamist, which she outwardly professes to be. The presentation of these to characters in a situation of abiding interest is the chief business of Shakespeare in "*Much Ado About Nothing*". From her query it is clear that Beatrice is anxious about Benedick's safety in the wars and wants to be assured of it. So the skirmish she puts up with Benedick, the moment he enters on the scene is only a mock-battle.

54. **Alas he gets Nothing etc.**—Beatrice while speaking of Benedick in rather bisparaging terms, says: In our last encounter Benedick was so worsted that he lost four out of his five wits, i.e., he was left with one wit only—the only wit that he still retained in him to distinguish him from a horse.

55. **Five wits**—"the five intellectual faculties corresponding with the five senses are—common wit, imagination, fancy, estimation and memory."—(Delius). *Cf. Sonnet*, CXLI. 9-10:

> "But my five wits nor my five senses can
> Dissuade one foolish heart from serving thee."

Here the expression possibly means nothing more than the five senses, and of its use with that senes Delius quotes an instance from Chaucer's *Persones Tale*.—(D)

Halting off—lamed and disabled after the skirmish.

57-58. **Let him bear.....horse**—if he had intelligence enough to keep himself warm (as a characteristic mark to distinguish him from his horse), let him regard it as the only thing to prove his superiority to his horse.

57. **Difference**—a heradic term, which is defined in heraldry as "certain figures added to coats of arms, to distinguish one branch of family from another, and how distant younger branches are from the elder."

N. B. "If he has wit enough to keep himself warm", is a proverbial phrase in current use meaning "keeping out of harm's way."

59. **To be known**—to make himself known as a man.

60. **He hath every month a sworn brother**—he has a new companion every month, with a fresh oath to share each other's secrets and fortunes. *Sworn brother*—is "an expression originally derived

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from the *fratris conjurare* (brothers sworn to each other) who, in the days of chivalry, mutually bound themselves by oath to share each others fourtune."—(Dyce).

62-63. **He wears his faith.....block**—he is apt to change his faith as repidly as fashionable people do in their dress.

N. B. "The hats of the time seem to have been capable of being reshaped : as they were of felt, they were re-blocked as whim or fashion led. There is a passage in Euphues, employing the same tune of changeable friendship."—(Singer).

Block—the wooden block on which hats were made or reshaped.

64. **Is not in your books**—is not in your favour or in your lists of friends or one you could. The implication is : Benedick changes his loyalty as rapidly as the fashions in dress.

N. B. "As the mutability of fashion was shown in nothing so much as in the head-dresses of both sexes. These blocks must have been perpetually changing their forms." Beatrice is poking fun at Benedick, though she is no serious. Notice her *mock-heroic* tone.

65. **No, an he were.....study**—notice how Beatrice takes the expression 'in one's books' in its literal sense and replies : No, were he in my books I would burn them. If Benedick's name happens to be found on the title-page of any book in my library, I would burn the whole lot. **My study**—the books I study, or my books.

66. **Squarer**—a quarrelsome person.

66-67. **Is there no young.....the devil**—is there no quarrelsome young person among his boon companions who will accompany him to ruin ?

68. **Most**—greatly ; mostly. **Right**—very.

Disease—plague, a most dangerous pestilence. The implication is ; Benedick is a type of infectious disease sooner caught than discarded. If Claudio once catches this "Benedick disease", he will have to spend a thousand pounds to get cured. Benedick is more a plague than a man.

72. **Presently**—Immediately.

73. **The Benedick**—'the plague' in Benedick.

74. **I will hold thee.....lady**—lady, I will no more enter in a wordy combat with you, or bandy words with you, but keep friends with you.

76. **You will never run mad, niece**—you are mad already niece. If this is not madness, I do not know what madness is like.

79. **Good Signior Leonato, are you etc.**—this entertainment of guests is "a kind of labour in which you take delight." The trouble and the cost may be disregarded as they are dictated by love. To Leonato such trouble incidental to the labour in entertaining guests and the cost thereof is delightful.

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81. **Encounter it**—meet it of your own accord.

82-85. **Never came trouble.....his leave**—while paying a compliment to his distinguished guests who have honoured him by their company on their way home, Leonato says that trouble can never come to him so long as they continue to share the hospitality of his house. On the contrary, there will be perfect happiness which will depart with the guests.

83. **Should remain**—might be expected to remain or reign in his house.

86. **Your charge**—the burden of entertaining guests which has devolved on you.

90. **Were you.....child**—on seeing Hero, Don Pedro asks if she is his daughter Leonato humorously replies that that was what her mother very often told him. So Benedick asks, "Were you in doubt sir, that you had occasion to ask her about her paternity." Leonato, however, turns the jest against Benedick, for he answers, "Signior Benedick, no, for then, you were a child, and as such I was not in the least doubt as the chastity of my wife."

91. **You have it full**—full in the face, like a well-delivered blow. If, says Don Pedro, Leonato is free from doubt on the subject because you were at that time but a child, we may guess what kind of a character is yours now that you have grown to manhood,—(D) : a well-deserved reproof has hit you back.

92. **Father herself**—she shows by her likeness to him who was her father.

93. **For you are.....father**—for you resemble your father and take after him both physically and mentally.

94-96. **If Signior Leonato be... ...she is**—it is a fact that she takes after her father, but yet I am sure she would like to be her own self rather than exchange her young head for her father's old and gray-haired one. "Like him, as she may be, she would not wish to change places with him."

97. **Still**—continually.

98. **Nobody marks you**—nobody pays any attention to what you say.

99. **Disdain**—a contemptuous expression.

101. **Is it possible etc.**—surely nobody can help being a mocker so long as a ridiculous creature, like Benedick, is about. *Cf. Corrolanus*, II i. 93, "Our very priests must become mockers, if they encounter such ridiculous subjects as you are."

102. **Meet**—proper ; suitable. The meaning is : if the most courteous person becomes disdainful, nobody is responsible for it except Benedick himself.

102-03. **Courtesy itself must.....presence**—"you are enough to turn courtesy into disdain, if you show yourself. The confusion between 'itself' and 'her presence' is due to Benedick's having personified 'disdain'.—(D.)

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N. B. This exchange of witty repartees between Beatrice and Benedick is perhaps the most attractive feature of the play.

104. **A turncoat**—a person who changes sides.

105. **Loved of**—loved by.

106. **In my heat**—truly.

108. **A dear happiness**—true good luck ; a precious piece of good fortune.

109. **Pernicious suitor**—wicked lover.

110. **Cold blood**—cool temperament. **I am of your etc.**—in that respect at all events we are of the same mind above love and marriage. **Humour**—disposition.

114-15. **A predestinate scratched face**—'the scratched face which is the destiny of any one who marries.' (Predestinate—L *prae*= before ; *destino*=determine, it means ordained beforehand by destiny). Benedick's suggestion is that the husband of such a shrewed lady as Beatrice is, would surely have his face scratched.

116. **An't were**—if it were.

118. **Parrot teacher**—given to such repetition. **Well, you are a rare Parrot-teacher**—just the person who would be fit to teach parrots, being always ready with sayings and sentences that they would be able to repeat—(D.)

119-20. **A bird of my tongue.....your**—a bird trained by me to speak is better than a horse which you have trained for fighting.

122. **And so good a continuer**—and did not tire any more than your tongue does—(D). Race-horses, for instance, are good stayers, "untiring and indefatigable in keeping up speed. Benedick speaks slightingly of Beatrice's habit of incessant talk by desiring that his horse had the same speed and staying power as her tongue. **So good a continuer**—with the same staying capacity as her tongue. **Keep your way**—remain as you are and continue babbling as before.

123. **I have done**—I have done all my talking.

124. **You always end with a jade's trick**—like a horse, you have recourse to silly tricks when exhausted ; you will adopt these tricks now that you are beaten in this wit-combat. **Jade**—a tired panting and exhausted animal ; a term of reproach to both men and women. Jade is a vicious horse, who behaves in a spiteful manner, that is, he stops suddenly and refuses to move on further.

126. **This is the sum of all, Leonato**—this is, in short, the arrangement finally fixed for our visit, Leonato.

N. B. We are to suppose that, during the wit combat between Beatrice and Benedick, Don Pedro, Leonato and others were talking apart about these arrangements which are now finalized.

132-33. **If you swear.....forsworn**—if you declare on oath that I am no hypocrite, you will not speak any lie and, therefore, you will not be guilty of perjury.

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134. **Being reconciled.**—*i. e.*, you being reconciled to the prince, your brother.

135. **I am not of many words**—I am not accustomed to talk too much ; I am not a man of many words.

137. **Please it your grace lead on**—will it please your grace to lead us on ?

141. **I noted her not**—I did not take particular notice of her, (possibly, for the sake of the play upon the words *note* and *not*).

143. **Do you question me as etc.**—should I express my sincere opinion as an honest man or whether I should speak in my usual role of a sneerer of the fair sex ? Note that Benedick's role is that of a sham misogynist and that his contempt for women is only a pose which he assumes for assuming himself and for his friends. That is why he falls an easy victim to the trap laid for him by Don Pedro and others in Act II, Scene iii.

145. **Professed tyrant**—a pitiless censor to women.

148. **Brown**—dark complexion. **A fair praise**—a praise for being fair in colour.

152. **In sport**—*i e.*, not serious.

154. **Would you buy her,.....her ?**—in the commercial sense of a would-be purchaser inquiring after some commodity its price etc. Is she a marketable commodity and are you a prospective purchaser that you are inquiring after her like a buyer.

156. **Yea, and a case to put it into**—yes, the world can buy such a jewel as Hero but also a jewel-case to keep it inside.

N. B. There is a play on the word *case* meaning a *jewel-case* as well as a *dress*.

156-57. **But speak you this with a sad brow ?**—are you really serious when you say this ? **Sad**— serious ; sober.

157. **Flouting Jack**—a jester ; an impudent, saucy fellow. Shakespeare's Jacks are many and they are always the terms of contempt, excepting where the reference is to great Jack, Falstaff. Flouting means mocking, hence, Jack, is a jester.

157-59. **Do you play the flouting Jack.....a rare carpenter**—"do you mean to laugh at us by telling us that blind Cupid is a good finder of hares and that Vulcan, the clumsy blacksmith, is a good carpenter." Are you jocking ? Are you speaking in all seriousness or just exaggerating about an ordinary woman ?

N. B. Though Claudio is sincere in his profession of love. Benedick is feigning surprise at such an estimate of the beauty of Hero. "If you are behaving like a mocking knave, as it appears to me from your exaggerated estimate of the beauty of Hero, I may as well tell you that blind Cupid has a keen eyesight and that the smith Vulcan is a very skilful carpenter.

158. **Hare-finder**—a sharp-sighted man. Arrian, writing some fourteen centuries before, tells us that in his day it was the

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custom to send out the hare-finders early in the morning of the coursing days. In fact, to detect a hare in brown fallow needs sharp and practised eyes.

N. B. Vulcan is the divine blacksmith who had his workshop on Mount Etna, where he forged the thunderbolts for Jove. *Jack*—is a common term of contempt. The clumsy blacksmith cannot by any stretch of imagination be a good carpenter ; not can blind Cupid be a gold hare-finder. Here we have two examples of antiphrasis.

159-60. **In what key shall a.....song**—how may one be in harmony with you ? In what key I am to join with you in the song ? Are you merely a mocking knave or one who has really fallen in love with her ? Or are you just laughing at them by telling them that blind Cupid is a good finder of hares and that the clumsy smith Vulcan is a good carpenter ? **To go in song**—to keep in ture with you ; or to give you proper answer.

163-64. **I can see yet without.....matter**—I do not need a pair of spectacles to see things, and I do not find in the young lady what you seem so have seen. **No such matter**—nothing of the kind.

165-67. **I can see yet without.....have you**—this speech is significant as it expresses Benedick's secret liking for Beatrice. His dislike for her is but a mere pretence. This unguarded confession prepares us for the readiness with which he is lured into a trap laid for him by the prince and his fellow conspirators. Benedick says that except for her defect of being like a fury, she is admittedly more handsome than Hero. The first of May is best part of spring and the last of December is the worst part of winter. This is a clear hint of the half-liking for Beatrice which is hidden under Benedick's depreciation of her.—(Rolfe).

170-71. **In faith, hath not.....suspicion ?**—Is there not a single man in the world who will avoid marriage and so escape the fear that his wife has cuckolded (played false with) him ? The old belief that a man who had suffered in this way had horns growing out of his forehead—a belief, originating in the story of Actaeon, is plenteously referred to in the dramatists and other writers of the Elizabethan Age'—(D.) **To wear.....suspicion**—to be cuckolded or played false by the wife. There is not a single married man in the world who is not cuckolded, *i. e.*, whose wife does not play false with him—who does not wear the cap with the suspicion of having *horns* under it. It was a common Elizabethan jest that a man whose wife has proved herself unfaithful to him, had *horns* growing out of his forehead. According to Benedick, the professed misogamist, marriage has its inevitable sequal, *viz.*, cuckoldry.

173-74. **Wear the print of it.....Sundays**—let your determination, to do so be seen in your sad and serious behaviour. "An allusion," says Steevens, "to the strict manner in which the Sabbath was observed by the Puritans, who usually spent that day in *sighs* and *gruntings*, and other hypocritical marks of devo-

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tion—(D.) **Wear the print of it**—do it thoroughly. **The print**—*i. e.*, the mark of bondage.

174. **Sigh away Sunday**—Sunday is perhaps the longest day for there is no work and no business. So it is the longest and the fullest day for a captive husband to sigh. Benedick wants to convey that should you be a husband, you must be a husband in the fullest sense.

178. **Constrain**—compel. Benedick's reluctance is, of course, humorously assumed.

179. **I charge thee on thy allegiance**—as a subject of my kingdom, I charge you to speak out on grounds of loyalty to the king.

181. **On my allegiance**—I am bound to speak out when you lay that charge upon me ; otherwise nothing would induce me to tell.

182. **With who** ?—with whom ?

182-83. **Now that is your grace's part**—it is your grace's part to ask with whom Claudio is in love ; I cannot volunteer to tell that. Benedick is of course only too glad to tell.—(D.) Here Benedick asks (playing the part of Pedro), and answers (playing the part of Claudio).

185. **So were it uttered**—so should it be spoken (if what he says were true).

185-87. **If this were so, so were.....it should be so**—this is how after Claudio makes his half-denial of being in love with Hero. Benedick replies by compairing Claudio's reply with the words uttered in an old tale which runs thus, as Mr. Blakeway heard it from his great-aunt : "Once upon a time there was a young lady (called Lady Mary in the story), who had two brothers. One summer they all three went to a country-seat of theirs which they had not before visited. Among the other gentry in the neighbourhood, who came to see them, was one Mr. Fox, a bachelor, with whom they, particularly the young lady, were much pleased. He often used to dine with, them and frequently invited Lady Mary to come and see his house. One day when her brothers were absent elsewhere, and she had nothing better to do, she determined to go thither ; and accordingly set out unattended. When she arrived at the house and knocked at the door, no one answered. At length she opened it, and went in. Over the portal of the hall was written '*Be bold, be bold, but not too bold*'. She advanced ; over the stair-case the same inscription ; she went up ; over the entrance of a gallery, the same. She proceeded ; over the door of a chamber, '*Be bold, be bold but not too bold, lest that your heart's blood should run cold*'. She opened it ; it was full of skeletons, tubs full of blood, etc. She retreated in haste ; coming down stairs, she saw, out of a window. Mr. Fox advancing towards the house, with a drawn sword in one hand, while with the other he dragged along a young Lady by her hair. Lady Mary had just time to slip down and hide herself under the stairs, before Mr. Fox and his victim arrived at

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the foot of them. As she pulled the young lady upstairs, she caught hold of one of the bannisters with her hand, on which was a rich bracelet. Mr. Fox cut it off with his sword : the hand and the bracelet fell into Lady Mary's lap, who then contrived to escape unobserved, and got home safe to her brother's house. After a few days, Mr. Fox came to dine with them as usual (whether by invitation, or of his own accord, this, deponent saith not). After dinner, when the guests began to amuse each other with extraordinary anecdotes, Lady Mary at length said she would relate to them a remarkable dream she had lately had. 'I dream,' said she, 'that as you, Mr. Fox, had often invited me to your house, I would go there one morning. When I came to the house, I knocked, but no one answered. When I opened the door, over the hall was written, '*Be bold, be bold, but not too bold*.' But said she turning to Mr. Fox, and smiling, 'it is not so, nor it was not *so* ; then she pursues the rest of the story, concluding at every turn with '*It is not so ; nor it was not so, and God forbid it should be so*, which he continues to repeat at every subsequent turn of the dreadful story, till she came to the circumstance of his cutting off the young lady's hand, when upon his saying as usual : '*It is not so, nor it was not so, and God forbid it should be so*.' Lady Mary resorts, '*But it is so and it was so and here is the hand I have to show*,' at the same time producing the hand and bracelet from her lap : whereupon the guests drew their swords and instantly cut Mr. Fox into a thousand pieces."

There is another version of the story, which runs thus : "A lady went to visit the house of Mr. Fox. Finding no one at home, she entered and came to a door, inscribed 'Be bold' : farther still another door inscribed 'Be bold, be bold, be not too bold'. At this, she saw Mr. Fox coming into the house dragging a young woman by the hair The aforesaid lady hid herself. Mr. Fox could not wrench a ring from the young woman's hand. Then, he clipped off her hand with his sword, which flew in the air and fell by the lady. She took the hand and escaped unseen. Soon afterwards, Mr. Fox came to her house to dinner. The lady told the story of her adventure to the guests, as if it had been all a dream. At every pause, Mr. Fox observed, 'It is not so, nor it was so, but indeed God forbid it should be so.' At last the lady reached the climax of the story and showed the hand. All fell upon Mr. Fox and slew him."

N. B. Claudio did not like to own up his love for Hero directly. So he said rather evasively and in a *cryptic style* : "If this were so, so were it uttered," which means, "If I am really in love, Benedick's statement about it was the most appropriate one." But, as Claudio's statement is evasive, Benedick says that Claudio purposely uses such vague language as that used in the old story cited above.

188. **If my passion change not etc.**—"If a change does not come over my feelings God forbid that it should be otherwise than that I am in love with her and hope to marry her." **Passion**—the nature of my feelings, rather then my ardent love.

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192. **To fetch me in**—to induce me to make a confession.

195. **By my two faiths, and troths**—*i. e.*, by my both 'faith and troths,' which are two things, referring to the words of Don Pedro and Claudio.

199. **How she should be loved**—"not in what way she should be loved, but that she should be etc., answering to Claudio's 'that I love her, I feel'; and so, 'nor know how she is worthy'."—(D.)

201. **Die in it at the stake**—am resolved to die at the stake (burnt alive) as punishment (for heresy etc.) in order to maintain that opinion.

202-03. **Thou wast ever.....beauty**—"you are always so ready to deny the virtues of woman, that if you die at the stake it will be only what a heretic like you deserves."—(D.) Benedick certainly did not despise beauty. He scoffed as the power of female beauty and hated those who surrounded themselves too readily to its charm.

204-05. **In the force of his will**—in the obstinate adherence to heterodox opinion: peculiar to a heretic—(Warburton); or in the strength of his carnal passion.

208. **A recheat winded in my forehead**—the horn in my forehead, when sounded, will serve as a warning to all men against marriage: *to wind a recheat*—to sound a call in the horn, usually hung round the shoulder of a hunter.

209. **Invisible**—incapable of being seen because the horns of a cuckold cannot be seen. **Baldrick**—a belt passing over one shoulder and underneath the other arm, used to hang his bugle.

206-09. **But that I will have a recheat.....pardon me**—all womankind must excuse my determination never to give them the opportunity of cuckolding or telling my horns grow in my forehead.

211-12. **And the fine is.....a bachelor**—'and to sum up, I will live, etc., **Go the finer**—be all the more handsomely dressed. **Fine**—conclusion.

N. B. The two meanings of the word 'fine' may be noted here. 'Fine' means 'finery in dress' and 'in fine' means 'by way of conclusion'.

215-16. **Ever I lose more blood.....drinking**—I will become so pale with love that a dose of wine, will not bring back the colour on to my cheeks.—(D.)

217. **Ballad maker's pen**—the reference is to the poets who write love-ballads in which the death of the misfortunes of lovers plays an important part. Here Benedick is speaking not only of such poets in contemptuous term but also of the instruments (*i.e.*, the pen) employed by them.

217-18. **Brothel-house**—the house of ill-fame.

220. **Argument**—subject for ridicule.

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221. **Hang me in a bottle etc.**—"this was one of the barbarous sports of former times. This practice was to enclose a cat in a suspended coop of open bars, and shoot at it with arrows till the poor animal was killed." **Bottle**—a hollow enclosure.

222-23. **Let him be clapp'd.....Adam**—let him be applauded as a famous archer. "An illusion to one of the three noted outlaws, famous for their skill in archery who figure in the spirited and picturesque ballad entitled, *Adam Bel, Clym of the Cleugh and William of Cloudesly*."—(Dyce). **Clapped on the shoulder**—a sign of approval.

221-23. **If I do, hang me in a bottle.....Adam**—Benedick replies that he will subject himself from the cruellest torture (shot at by a cruel archer while suspended in mad-air like a cat in a small wooden barrel) and would not at all mind if the man who hits him by his arrows is publicly applauded as a famous archer and given the name of Adam Bell, the notorious outlaw.

N. B. Sporting at a cat imprisoned in a closed wicker-basket was one of the popular sports in Elizabethan times.

224. **Try**—prove.

225. **In time the savage bull etc.**—this line is slightly misquoted from Kyd's *Spanish Tragedy* which runs thus, 'In time the savage bull sustains the yoke.' Kyd himself borrowed the whole passage from Watson's *Passionate Centurie of Love* (1582) where the line is 'In time the bull is brought to bear the yoke.' Both are adaptation from Ovid.—(D.)

228. **Let me viley painted etc.**—let me painted as vilely as the painting of a sign-board hung up in front of an ale-house, and let the motto under my portrait be 'Here you may see etc.'—(D.)

231-32. **Horn-mad**—stark mad.

233-34. **Nay, if Cupid have.....shortly**—"you will suffer for this before long. Cupid will not let you off so easily, if he has used up all his golden arrows from his quiver in Venice—If he has still left in his quiver some arrows, he will not let Benedick (the hater of womankind) go. The city of Venice, was proverbial for the amours and dissipations of its inhabitants."—(D.) The expression means that Benedick will shortly fall an easy victim to love. It seems that Don Pedro has already been thinking of a plan by which he would be able to ensnare love-dying Benedick. **Quake**—suffer and be victimised.

235. **I look for an earthquake**—if I am to quake at all, I should very much prefer an earthquake to a love-quake, since all quakes are of the same nature and one thing is as likely as the other.

236. **Well, you will temporize etc.**—you will come to terms with, accommodate yourself to the hours, and make the best use of your time, when the time for the quake comes, as it is sure to, sooner or later, you will have to suffer.

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237. **Repair to**—betake yourself to ; take shelter in.

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240. **I have almost matter enough** etc.—well may I boast of my capacity to undertake so important a task with which I am entrusted.

241-43. **And so I commit you.....your loving friend Benedick** —this is how Benedick takes leave of Claudio, and Don Pedro to undertake the task with which he is entrusted, *viz.*, to tell Leonato that they will not fail to be present at supper, he inadvertantly speaks in the formal style in which letters and dedicatory Epistles concluded in those days when he says, "and so I commit you." Claudio then takes it up when he says, "To the tuition of God ; from my house if I had it" ; and Don Pedro concludes it as he says, "Sixth of July : Your loving friend Benedick."

"The reference is to the fromal conclusions of epistles dedicatory and letters. Barnaby Googe thus ends his Dedication to the first edition of *Palingenius*, 156 ; "And thus committing Your Ladyship with all yours to the tuition of the most merciful God, I end. From Staple Inn at London, the eight and twenty of March' —(Reed)." This style of addressing letters and dedicatory epistles had become obsolete in Shakespeare's time.

244-46. **The body of your discourse.....on neither**—the main portion of your conversation is often, as now pitched up with quotations etc.' which have but little connection with its general purport.'—(D) **Guarded**—ornamented with some trimming. **Fragments** —patches. **Guarded fragments**—your discourse is decked with many rags very loosely tacked on—(Samson) : expressed in simple language, patched up with quotations. **And the guards are.....on neither**— the quotations have but little connection with the general drift except very slightly. **Neither**—"introducing the negative sense implicit in the statement." **Guards**—quotations (ornamental trimmings). **But slightly**—the relevance of quotations to the general drift of purport is very slight. **Basted on**—sewn together with temporary sitches.

246. **Flout**—make fun of. **Old ends**—old quotations taken from the *Holy Writ* (*Venerable and sacred fragment*).

247. **Examine your conscience**—let there be a searching of the heart. This expresson is, rather vague. Benedick perhaps means to say, "your discourse is decked out with many rags very loosely tacked on ; you had better examine your conscience to see if 'in God's keeping rags and tatters are to be used.' The other explanation, and perhaps more true, appears to be that Benedick wants to convey to Don Pedro and Claudio that their talk has been full of very tasteless tags and that they should examine their conscience and see if their speech was not more open to amendment than his.

246-47. **Ere you flout old ends.....conscience**—Benedick says in a mocking tone—"Be careful how you ridicule things so venerable as these odd ends." In these words there does not seem to be any such recondite meaning as Johnson and other critics would give to them" (D). The meaning seems to be, "Examine if

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your sarcasms do not touch yourself. See whether they do not apply to yourself."

249-50. **May do me good**—may be of great help to me.

251. **My love is thine to teach**—I shall be glad to be taught by you ; I am ready to be taught by you. **Teach it**—show me what you want me to do for you.

254. **Any son**—the question is rather odd ; perhaps it was put to show dramatically that Hero should have no brother—at least of fighting age.

256. **Dost thou affect her**—do you feel yourself to be lovingly inclined towards her ?

257. **On this ended action**—on the *Campaign* just finished.

260. **Than to drive.....love**—than to allow of my liking for her being carried so far as to merit the name of love.

261. **But now I am returned**—but now that I have returned from the military campaign etc.

262. **Rooms**—room or place.

263. **Thronging**—crowding.

264-65. **All prompting me how fair.....to wars**—all suggesting to me how fair Hero is and reminding etc. **Saying I lik'd her... ...to wars**—reminding me that I liked her before I went to the wars.

266. **A lover**—this is perhaps a development of Claudio's liking —liking turning into love.

267. **Book of words**—with whole volumes of love-talk, *i. e.*, talking like a book.

268. **It**—love.

269. **Break with her**—"open the matter in conversation with her ; sound her on the subject and so make it easier for you to declare your passion.

271. **To twist so fine a story**—to spin a yarn.

273. **Complexion**—external appearance ; colouring of the face.

274. **My liking**—my protestation of love.

275. **I would have.....treatise**—'I would if I had followed my own promptings, have made declaration of love appear less abrupt, approaching the subject generally in as lengthened conversation. **Salved**—smoothed it over ; palliated. **Treatise**—a written discourse ; here any long tale, conversation etc.

272-75. **How sweetly you do minister.....longer treatise**—this is how Claudio compliments Don Pedro on this fine ability to minister love. The latter is well able to judge person if he has in love by the very colour of his face. As for Claudio, he has to proceed very tactfully lest his advances be considered as too abrupt. He would rather broach the matter of love incidentally in and through a lengthened discourse and by gradual stages as to be

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sure of his ground. Notice that the first question he asks Don Pedro about his sweetheart betrays his selfish interest in his dowry and that he is more a seeker of material wealth and position than a real lover.

276. **What need the bridge etc.**—either, why need the bridge (be) broader ? Or what need is there (that) the bridge (be) broader ? The meaning is, what need is there for more than the occasion demands.

277. **The fairest grant is the necessity**—to grant what is necessary is the fairest grant that can be made ; what will serve is fit. The best favour that could be granted under the circumstances is to give a man what he needs ; there is indeed no need for the bridge to be broader than the flood which it helps to cross. Don Pedro actually proves himself to be a successful match-maker, though he chooses to remain a bachelor.

278. **—'T is once thou lovest**—enough has been said ; you admit that you love her—nothing more is needed—that being so, I will etc. **Once**—once for all.

279. **Fit thee with**—furnish you with.

280. **Revelling**—merrymaking ; a masked ball.

281. **I will assume thy part etc.**—I will woo her as your deputy.

282. **Unclasp my heart**—open my heart, *i.e.*, lay bare my feelings as Claudio.

285. **Strong encounter**—vigorous attack. **Amorous tale**—the story of my love.

286. **After**—later on. **Break**—divulge.

287. **Conclusion**—result.

288. **Presently**—immediately.

Act I : Scene II

Summary

In the previous scene Claudio, being a novice in the art of courtship, has accepted Don Pedro's offer to woo Hero for him as his deputy under the disguise of Claudio at the masked ball to be held the same night. This courtship by proxy causes 'much ado about nothing', as it is partially overheard by a blundering servant of Leonato's brother who conveyed it to his master, Antonio. This wrong report is to the effect that the prince Don Pedro and not Claudio has fallen in love with Hero, and he has decided to divulge it at the masked ball that night. When Leonato meets his brother Antonio, the latter reports to him what he has come to know from his servant. Leonato is overjoyed to hear this news. He says he will tell his daughter about it, so that his daughter may be the better prepared for an answer.

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Dramatic Importance

This scene is introduced between two scenes of different characters. It throws light on the sagacity of Leonato. When he is told about Don Pedro's wooing of his daughter and of asking his consent to marry her later, he quickly prepares her for such a contingency without caring to verify the report from the servant as to its correctness, for he knows that such matters had better not be discussed with servants. Besides, this scene is designed to give the audience the impression of some intervening time passing between the first scene and the scene of the masked ball.

NOTES

1. **Cousin**—really, nephew. In Shakespeare's days the word 'cousin' was used almost as an equivalent to kinsman.

2. **This music**—this band or 'consort' of musicians of which we were speaking.

4. **Yet**—hitherto.

5. **Are they good ?**—Shakespeare uses both news and tidings indifferently as singular or as plural.

7. **A good cover**—a good outward appearance.

8. **Thick pleached alley**—densely interwoven walk.

9. **Orchard**—garden. **This much**—so far.

10. **Discovered**—revealed.

12. **Accordant**—favourable to his suit, or likely to agree.

13. **By the top**—to take time by the forlock ; in reference to the old presentment of time as having a lock of hair in front and being bald behind.—(D.)

14. **Wit**—good sense.

15. **Good sharp**—fairly intelligent.

16. **And question him yourself**—and do you question him yourself.

17. **No, no, we will etc.**—I will not question it my self—I don't see necessity of verifying it—for I shall regard this as a more dream till it is realised in actual practice. **Hold it**—look upon it.

17-18. **Till it appear itself**—till it appears in a tangible form ; till it materialises.

18. **Withal**—with this.

20. **Go you and tell her of it**—he seems to change his mind and delegate the task to Antonio, as being too busy himself.

21. **Cousins**—Antonio's son now crosses the stage along with musician, and it may be with others. These words are evidently meant for the son of Antonio, who now goes off the stage to inform Hero of Don Pedro's love for her. **I cry you mercy, friend**—I beg your pardon ; excuse me.

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22. **I will use your skill**—make use of your advice and help. **Good Cousin**—perhaps refers to the son of Antonio.

Act I : Scene III

Summary

This scene is laid in the same place and takes place on the same day as the previous one. It shows the sullen bastard brother of Don Pedro, named Don John, who of late stood out against his brother in a revolt against him, and has, since his defeat, been taken into his grace, in conversation with Conrade, one of his followers.

On being asked by Conrade why Don John is so gloomy, the latter confesses that it is his nature to be what he is. Conrade, however, advises him to take true root by the fair weather—to improve his relationship with his brother. Don Pedro, now that he has lately become reconciled with him and has been taken back into his grace, which he can best demonstrate by being cheerful in his brother's victor. To this request of Conrade he promptly replies that he would prefer to be 'a canker in a hedge than a rose in Don Pedro's grace.' His reprentance is insincere. His is an envious spirit who cannot hide what he is. He is bitter against the prince (his brother) against society. He hates Claudio also as he is the prince's friend. It is his nature to bite, for he is, as he bluntly confesses, "a plain-dealing villain." When he is thus speaking, the opportunity for revenge is supplied by the news brought by Borachio, another of his accomplices. The latter reports that Don Pedro will woo Hero for himself and having obtained her, give her to Count Claudio. At this news he makes up his mind to cross 'the young start-up,' Claudio. He is already jealous of Claudio for gaining all glory in the recent war. "If I can cross him any way, I bless myself every way" he adds, as his true motive-spirit is a kind of envy-sickness and it better fits his blood "to be disdained of all than to fashion a carriage to rob love from any." His followers, Borachio and Conrade, promise to assist him 'to the death' in carrying out his wicked purpose.

Dramatic Importance

The scene introduces Don John, the villain of the piece, whose action is motivated by sheer malic—a smaller edition of Iago in his "motiveless malignity"—a villain for the sake of villainy. The conflict developes further in the next scene and we breathlessly wait for the progress of events. The audience is farewarned of more tragic entanglements that are to issue out of it, leading ultimately to some terrible action of far-reaching consequences.

NOTES

1. **What the good-year**—an imprecation, sometimes used in a good-humoured way, of which neither the origin nor meaning has been certainly discovered. Furness says, "It was evidently a good mouth-filling oath, which was not dangerous in that it had lost all

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meaning. While it became obsolete, its twin brother in obscurity, 'what the dickens' also used by Shakespeare, has survived."—(D.) Its meaning may be something like this: "What the pox on it." It indicates some degree of impatience.

1-2. **Why are you thus.....sad ?**—why are you so hopelessly morose and sullen ? **Out of measure**—excessively.

3-4. **There is no measure.. .....without limit**— my sadness is born of envy or malice, which is spontaneous and without bounds or limits.

5. **You should hear reason**—you should be amenable to reason since there is no justification for your melancholy.

6. **And when I have.....brings it ?**—it would be useless to listen to the dictates of reason when I have heard them.

7-8. **If not a present.....sufferance**—if reason cannot cure this disease, it may at least teach you or develop in you the capacity for patient endurance.

10. **Born under Saturn**—born when Saturn was predominant, hence, morose. In Shakespeare's time people had great faith in astrology. "No one now puts any faith in astrology, or counts that the planet under which man is born will affect his temperament make him for life of a disposition grave or gay, lively or severe. Yet our language affirms as much ; for we speak of men as 'jovial' or 'saturnine' or 'mercurial'. Jovial, as being born under the planet Jupiter or Jove, which was the joyfullest star, and of happiest augury of all ; a gloomy, severe person is said to be 'Saturnine', born, that is, under the planet Saturn, who makes those that own his influence, being born when he was in the ascendant, grave and stern as himself : another we call 'mercurial' or light-headed, as those born under the planet, Mercury, were accounted to be. The same faith in the influence of the stars survives in 'disastrous', 'ill-starred', 'ascendancy', 'lord of the ascendent,' and indeed in 'influence' itself."—(Trench : *The Study of Words*, p. 170). **Goest about**—busiest yourself in applying.

10-11. **A moral medicine**—a maxim as a medicine.

11. **Mortifying**—deadly.

9-11. **I wonder that there.....mischief**—I wonder how one born under the influence of the star 'Saturn' (as you say, you had been) can now go about preaching a sermon on the virtues of patient endurance.

11-12. **I cannot hide what I am : I must be sad etc.**—Dr. Johnson makes the following remarks : "This is one of our author's natural touches. An envious and unsocial mind, too proud to give pleasure and too sullen to receive it, always endeavours to hide its malignity from the world and from itself under the plainness of simple honesty, or the dignity of haughty independence."—I had rather be what nature makes me, however mean.

Don John is another of the Shakespearean villains, whose

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nature has been warped by their circumstances. He is a bastard brother of Don Pedro, and the stinging sense of his shameful origin has turned him into a social Ishmaelite, who see in every man a natural enemy.—(*Boas*).

13. **Stomach**– appetite.

14. **Drowsy**—sleepy. **Tend on**—wait on ; care for.

15. **Claw**—flatter in his humour—in his whims and caprices : out of humour.

17-18. **Yea ; but you must not.....controlment**—Conrade advises Don John that it would not do for him to make a show of his sullenness and haughty independence till he is in a position to exercise his power. **Controlment**—restraint.

19. **Stood out**—been a rebel against ; been in opposition to.

21. **But by the fair that you make yourself**—unless you make fair weather for yourself, *i.e.*, adapt yourself to his moods and caprices.—(D.)

21-22. **It is needful that.....harvest**—it is essential that you should in the altered circumstances behave yourself in such a way as to ensure your own future.

23-25. **I had rather be a canker.....to rob love from any**—Don John makes no secret of the villainy of his nature when he confesses to his follower Conrade that even through reconciled with his brother he had rather be what his nature makes him, *i.e.*, mean, envious and vicious ; he would rather like to be disdained by every one than get into the favour of anybody. It suits his temper to be a noxious weed in the hedge rather than a rose shining in the graces of his brother, Don Pedro. He is the last person to bask in the sunshine of his brother's grace or favour. It better suits his disposition to be full of hate for everybody and regard everyman as his natural enemy.

Notice that Don John "makes a virtue of the surliness which he has not the grit to conceal."

24. **Blood**—disposition ; temperament.

25. **Than to fashion.....from any**—than to shape my manner as to steal the love of a single person.

25-27. **In this, though I cannot.....plain-dealing villain**—in this respect though I lay no pretension to be called an honest man, given to flattery, yet it cannot be denied that if I am a villain I am at all events a straightforward and plain-dealing one.

27-29. **I am trusted with.....sing in my cage**—they show perfect trust in me—yes, by putting a muzzle on me like a dangerous dog ; they give me perfect freedom—yes, by fettring me with a clog, like an animal, they are afraid, will run away ; so, I like a caged bird, I am determined I will not sing to please them. The trust placed in him is like that reposed in a dangerous dog after putting a covering on its mouth to prevent it from biting or like a caged bird determined not to sing to please its captor, to show itself to be happy. Don

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John says : "If my mouth were free I would bite ; If my legs were free I should go as I choose. Since I cannot do any of these things, therefore I will do what mischief I can.

28. **Muzzle**—a covering for the mouth of an animal to prevent it from biting or eating. **Clog**—a loose wooden block tied to a horse's leg to prevent its running away and becoming unmanageable. **Enfranchis'd with a clog**—Don John is evidently smarting under the ill-usage of Don Pedro and his men arising out of a suspicion of his motives. They trust him out only after putting a muzzle on his mouth, somewhat like a dangerous dog—thus fettering him with a clog, like a run-away horse, for fear lest it should run away. Such a freedom is a misnomer.

28-29. **Therefore I have decreed, not to sing in my cage**—so like a bird imprisoned in a cage, I am determined not to sing praises of my captor in order to show him that I am happy.

33. **I make all use of it for I use it only**—I make the fullest use of my discontent because I glory in it, and surliness is a part and parcel of my very nature.

N. B. Don John not only mixes his metaphors but also makes pun : "I use it indeed and I use it as my own companion."

35. **I came**—*i.e.*, I have just come.

37. **Intelligence**—information.

38. **Model**—plan ; design.

39. **What is he for a fool**—what kind of food is he ? This expression was very common in Elizabethan England. This present rendering would be 'what fool is it ?' **That betroths himself to unquietness**—that marries himself to discontent.

40. **Marry**—*i.e.*, by the Virgin Mary, an oath frequent in Shakespeare's time, though concealed in form in order to evade the statute against profane swearing.—(D.) **Right hand**—trustiest following and help.

43. **Proper squire**—a fine fellow (in a tone of contempt).

43-44. **And who ? which way looks he ?**—and who is the lady ? *Which way looks ?—i. e.*, whom has he in his eye for a wife ? On whom are his looks of love turned ?

47. **A very forward March-chick**—said contemptuously of his precocity in thinking of marriage while still so young ; the early spring in England being too cold as a rule for the rearing of chickens. —(D.) Apparently meant for Hero, who is supposed to be quite young.

49. **Entertained**—engaged ; hired.

49-50. **Being entertained for.....musty room**—as I was airing a damp and foul smelling room while engaged in smoking. "The neglect of cleanliness among our ancestors rendered such precautions not often necessary." —(Steevens).

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51. **Sad conference**—serious talk.

52. **Arras**—tapestry for curtains called by the name of the place, Arras in France, where they were most commonly made ?

56-57. **Hath all the glory of my overthrow**—I owe it entirely to his interference that I fell into my brother's displeasuse—(D.) Don John's prejudice against Claudio is due to the fact that the latter has been able to ingratiate himself into the former's favour by his active participation in the suppression of the rebellion, at such a young age.

57. **Overthrow**—downfall. **Cross him any way, I bless myself**—hindering him in any way I bless myself. The allusion is to the making of the sign of the cross, as by a priest when blessing or by a layman when endeavouring to avert a danger, a curse, etc.

60. **The great supper**—The great supper mentioned by Borachio in his speech (line 35 of this scene), but here of course spoken of scornfully : that supper which they enjoy all the more because I have been disgraced—a piece of egotism which at the same time shows the malignant nature of Don John, he attributing to others the feelings which would have been his if in their place.—(D.)

61. **Would the cook were of my mind**—in his malice, Don John wishes that the cook were as malignant-minded as he is, so that he might agree to poison the whole company of guests at supper which Leonato is preparing in honour of the prince.

62. **Go prove**—see ; decide.

Act II : Scene I

Summary

This is the much expected scene of the "great supper", and masked ball held in Leonato's house. Leonato has invited Don Pedro and his company at supper and has arranged for a masked ball afterwards. "Leonato, Antonio, his brother, Hero, his daughter, Beatrice, Margaret and Ursula have entered the hall. Naturally enough they start discussing about the melancholy and secretive nature of Don John which also draws the caustic comment of Beatrice on the count as well as on the absent Benedick. She feels that one who occupies a position midway between the two extremes, *viz.*, Don John and Benedick, would be a likeable character. She expresses her repugnance towards men in general and marriage in particular. At this Leonato humorously tells her that she will never get a husband if she is shrewd of her tongue. Antonio suggests that Hero at least should be ruled by her father's choice of a husband for her. Beatrice commenting on this, says, that she might go by her father's advice provided her prospective husband is a really handsome fellow, and warns her against being too ready in accepting any proposals from the prince or from any quarter. As for herself, Beatrice says that she would rather go to heaven as a maid, for there is no likelihood of

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her being fitted with a husband, till God makes man of some other metal than earth.

By this time the masked ball begins with the arrival of the revellers with their masks on. Don Pedro starts wooing Hero as Claudio's proxy. He leads her out for a dance, draws her aside and enters into conversation with her to make love to her on behalf of Claudio. Balthazar, Don Pedro's attendant, pairs himself off with Margaret, a gentlewoman attending on Hero. The third pair consists of Antonio and Ursula, another of Hero's maids. It is now the turn of Benedick to pair himself off with Beatrice. Benedick takes advantage of his disguise and tells her that Beatrice is disdainful, and that she has all her wit borrowed from a book of coarse humour. Beatrice retaliates by saying that it must have been the fool of a Benedick who has told him so and who is really "the prince's jestor", notorious for his gift of devising impossible slanders.

After the dance is over, all make their exist except Don John, Borachio and Claudio. Don John sees through the mask of Claudio and tells him that his brother (the prince) is wooing Hero for himself. Borachio confirms this and adds that Don Pedro has sworn to marry Hero that very night. At this the credulous Claudio believes at once that he has been betrayed in the basest manner possible by his friend and patron (Don Pedro), and walks away from the company in sheer disgust. Benedick now re-enters and openly resolves to be revenged on Beatrice for her disparagement of him. At this stage, on seeing Beatrice enter along with Hero, Leonato and Claudio, Benedick abruptly departs from the presence of 'My Lady Tongue". Claudio is now greatly relieved and over-joyed to be assured from his friend and patron (Don Pedro) that he has won Hero for him. At this Leonato offers him his daughter and his fortunes. Beatrice is much delighted with this welcome news of her cousin's happiness. While the young couple are whispering to each other, she exclaims that she alone may "sit in a corner and cry 'heigh-ho' for a husband." Don Pedro asks her if she would marry him, she refuses to marry the prince and then departs from the scene. The prince (Don Pedro), the invitable match-maker, feels himself called upon to conceive of a plan for bringing the pair—Benedick and Beatrice—together "into a mountain affection, the one for the other." He now proposes to humour Beatrice and so deals with Benedick that they should fall in love with each other and be finally united in wedlock.

Dramatic Importance

It is a long and brilliant scene, in which the action of the main plot is well advanced in the betrothel of Hero and Claudio, in spite of the somewhat abortive attempt at mischief-making by Don John, which serves a three-fold purpose. In the first place the complication created by Don John becomes a miniature of the whole play. Secondly, it makes the main plot seem probable by giving the impression that we are in a world where such things happen to complicate matters. Thirdly, it prepares the audience for the future behaviour of Don John whose villainous capabilities are yet unknown to us.

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The scene also throws into bold relief some unamiable aspects of the character of Claudio, *viz.*, his highly suspicious and gullible nature and his thoughtlessness in rushing headlong into wrong conclusions. He is definitely the type of person who is easily led to suspect his friend, believe in the imputations against his betrothed and who is ready to discard her on this account. Even after his doubts have been resolved and the machinations of Don John thoroughly exposed, he is willing to lend a willing ear to the same villain. A foil to this character is presented in the person of Don Pedro—the type of amiable and chivalrous gentleman who is ready to do a good turn to his friends and acquaintances. The scene also aggravates the feud between Beatrice and Benedick to its culminating point of a violent breach.

NOTES

3-4. **How tartly that.....an hour after**—how sour are the looks of the gentleman ! Whenever I see him, I feel heart-burn in my stomach. "The pain commonly called the 'heart-burn' proceeds from too much acidity in the stomach and is, therefore, properly enough imputed to tart (*i.e.*, sour) looks."—(Johnson). **Tartly**—sourly.

4. **An hour after**—for an hour after seeing him.

7. **In the midway**—midway between.

8-9. **My lady's eldest son**—apparently a spoilt child and, therefore, allowed to talk constantly. No particular lady is here meant, *my lady's* being used generically ; like some fine lady's person, a house-bred lad, his mother's spoilt darling."—(D.)

9. **Tattling**—talking over trifling matters.

Comment. According to Beatrice one who was midway between the two extremes of Don John and Benedick would make an excellent man.

15. **It a' could get her good will**—provided that he should win her favour. Notice the unexpected close to the sentence, almost nullifying the previous clause.

17. **Shrewd**—bitter ; ill-natured ; malicious.

18. **Curst**—bad-tempered ; vicious ; sharp.

19-20. **I shall lessen Gods sending that way**—I shall limit God's gifts in that respect ; for, as she goes to explain, God will send her no husband and therefore no horns.

23-24. **Just, if he send me no.....evening**—exactly so. If He sends me no husband ; and that He may grant me that blessing, I pray to Him morning and evening.—(D) **Just**—just so.

Comment. Notice the stout opposition of Beatrice and Benedick to the very idea of matrimony, shows that marriage is uppermost in their thoughts. All this 'much ado' will count for nothing in the end when the whirlgig of time will bring in its revenges.

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25-26. **I could not endure.....woolen**—to lie next a husband who had a beard would be as bad as lying between the blankets, without any sheets, as Steevens explains the phrase 'in the woollen'. —(D). Beatrice says humorously that she cannot stand a husband with a beard on his face and that to lie next such a husband would be as bad as lying between blankets without sheets. If the husband has no beard, he has not attained the full stature of manhood. Both the alternatives are repugnant to her, so she proposes to remain unmarried.

33-34. **I will even take sixpence.....into hell**—rather than that such fate should be mine, I would even bind myself to a bear-keeper by taking six-pence as a pledge to lead his apes into hell.—(D) It is said that unmarried women were doomed to lead apes in hell. So Beatrice says that she would serve as an apprentice under a bear-keeper, who also generally kept apes and lead them (the apes) into hell. She is prepared to undergo such a punishment than to take husband in marriage. **In earnest**—as a pledge ; in pay or as a tip. **Bear-ward**—the bear-keeper, who sometimes kept apes for the amusement of persons. **Lead his apes into hell**—critics explain this to be the proverbial fate of old maids. To mind apes in hell was a proverbial punishment for old maids who had evaded the duty of minding the children in life—The same expression is used in *Taming of the Shrew* (Act II, Sc. i). where Katharina, jealous of Binaca, exclaims—

".....Nay, now I see
She is your treasure, she must have a husband ;
I must dance bare-foot on her wedding-day,
And, for your love to her, lead apes in hell."

36. **But**—only.

39-40. **To Saint Peter : for the heavens**—Saint Peter would conduct her into heaven by opening the gate with the golden key. Saint Peter is the guardian of the keys. **For the heavens**—it is an exclamation equivalent to 'By heaven.' This phrase was current in the literature of the Elizabethan Age. This means to convey in indirectly that Beatrice would be sent to heaven by the Devil of hell with the excuse that hell was the place for husbands and not for maids like Beatrice. One more interpretation is accepted in this regard. It is that heaven is a place where there is neither marrying nor giving on marriage. In either case, one thing is certain that Beatrice has been identified with bachelordom of heaven.

44. **Make curtsy**—the word 'curtsy' means the low bow made by women as they kneel and bend the body in salutation.

48. **Fitted with**—mated with a suitable husband, one who understands how to treat you.

50. **Metal—material.**

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53. **Wayward marl**—wilful and incalculable earth. (It is a beautiful phrase besides being humorous.) It suggests that man, who is only a quintessence of dust has erred and strayed from the way of faith and duty. **Marl**—a kind of earth consisting partly of time, partly of clay, which is used in fertilising the soil.

54-55. **To match in my kindred**—to marry with those so closely related to me, of a nearer degree of relationship than is permitted by the church—(D) ; a marriage of such close relationship (*i. e*, marrying a man who has been made of clay like me) is banned by the church.

56-57. **If the Prince do solicit.....your answer**—if Don Pedro woos you with a view to marriage, you should welcome such a proposal.

57. **In that kind**—with reference to marriage ; in that way, *i.e.*, the way of marriage.

59. **In good time**—used in a double sense, *viz.*, (1) keeping good time in music, and (2) doing a thing at the right moment. The meaning is : marriage not contracted in good time loses all its charm. **Important**—importunate or insistent.

60. **Measure**—proper degree ; moderation. The significance of the dance-measure alluded to is explained by Beatrice herself.

60-61. **There is measure.....the answer**—there is proper degree or moderation in everything and so you should dance out your answer.

61-66. **For, hear me Hero : wooing.....sink into his grave**—when Leonato advises his daughter, Hero, not to be hesitant in the matter of acceptance of the offer of marriage of Don Pedro, Beatrice proceeds to expound the various stages of wooing and marriage. She advises Hero to exercise moderation and if Don Pedro be too insistent, then she should dance out the answer ; for *wooing marriage* and the *follow-up repentance* are like three varieties of dance. Wooing like a highland dance is not lively and is hasty ; wedding is full of dignity ; and repentance, representing the last stage of married life, moves faster and faster till the grave is reached.

63. **Scotch jig**—a highland dance of a lively character.

64. **Measure**—any stately dance with dignity and well-defined rhythm.

65. **Ancientry**—old-fashioned manners. **Repentance**—marry in haste and repent at leisure. **Bad legs**—tottering legs.

66. **Cinque-pace**—the name of a kind of dance—"a dance the steps of which were regulated by the number *five*.—(Dyce). Cinque-pace of repentance, which comes from overhasty marriage, is represented as a kind of dance consisting of five steps. In this stage we sink a pace with tottering legs into the grave, referring to the slow and solemn strain of the finale. Its movement was a step to the left, a step to the right, a step to the left, a step to the right and a 'sault majeue,' which seems to have lasted for two bars—

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probably a leap with a curtsy. Elizabethan dancing was more acrobatic than our own and required a good deal of high-stepping and capering. **Faster and faster**—this refers to the acceleration of the movement of the dance towards the finale.

67. **Passing shrewdly**—exceedingly keen and with enough of mischievous wit.

68-69. **I can see a church by daylight**—note the mischievous irony underlying this remark of Beatrice. **See a church**—it is something suggesting marriages.

70-71. **Make good room**—stand aside and give them plenty of room to enter.

S. D. As to the entry of Don Pedro, Claudio, and others there is many a comment of different commentators. In fact, there are many difficulties here. In the first instance, there appears to be no reason why Claudio should enter alongwith Don Pedro and others, for he neither danes nor does he speak till much of the scene is over. Similarly Don John also enters along with these entrants. He too does not dance, as far as we can say, and does not speak till much of the scene is over. Secondly, how do they keep themselves engaged during the time, when others dance.

72. **Friend**—lover.

73. **So you walk**—provided you walk.

74. **I am yours for the walk, etc.**—I am ready to walk with you and most ready to walk when it is to walk away from you.

77. **I may say so, when I please**—I have never said so, whatever you may choose to think ; I may say so at pleasure.

79. **Favour**—look ; appearance. *Cf.* Bacon : In beauty, that of favour is more than that of colour ; and that of decent and gracious motion more than that of favour."—(43rd Essay).

79-80 **For God defend.....like the case**—for God forbid that your face should be no better than your mask, *i. e.*, as ugly as his mask. **Defend**—forbid.

81-82. **My visor is Philemon's roof.....is Jove**—when Don Pedro desires Hero to walk with him, she agrees to do so provided she likes his face, adding 'God forbid that your face should be no better than your mask.' At this Don Pedro replies that his visor is Philemon's roof while within the house (*i. e.*, the visor) is Jove, meaning thereby that his face is handsome, only the mask (roof) is hideous-looking. In spite of the two faces, (those of Don Pedro and Hero), being masked, each makes shrewd guesses as to who the other is, though each is unwilling to divulge his or her identity.

The story told in the *Metamorphoses* of Ovid, is briefly this : The aged couple Philemon and Baucis, the two old peasants of Phrygia, living in a poor hovel, were the only two persons who gave shelter to Jupiter and Mercury (disguised) to their straw-roofed cottage. The grateful gods saved the couple from a sudden flood by way of reward for their hospitality, and changed their cottage

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into a temple, and Philemon and Baucis were made the priest and priestess.

83. **Why, then your visor should be thatched**—why, then, your mask should have been thatched, if it were like Philemon's roof. **Visor**—mask.

84. **Speak low if you speak love**—not the reluctance on the part of Don Pedro to divulge his identity. Hence he is asking Hero to speak in whispers.

90. **I love you the better etc** —*i.e.*, that is no fault at all, but a good custom, for the hearers may benefit by taking part in your prayers so far at all events, as saying 'Amen' to them.—(D.)

91. **Amen**—'be it so,' said at the end of a prayer by a priest.

94-95. **And God keep him out.....answer, clerk**—and God keep the danger out of sight when the dance is finished. So Margaret comes out with her trump card. She asks the unlettered clerk (Balthazar) to cry 'Amen' again, as he has done before. At this Balthazar seizes her up and bids good-bye to her, being naturally ashamed of saying 'Amen' to this. **Clerk**—the reader of the responses in the English church. **Answer, clerk**—*i.e.*, say 'Amen'.

96. **The clerk is answered**—your severe words have made me dumb : you have scolded me to silence.

98. **At a word**—in a word ; plainly ; in brief.

99. **Waggling**—waggling or moving the head, peculiar to Antonio in his old age, as is customary with old people.

100. **Counterfeit**—mimic. Antonio pretends as if he is somebody else.

101-02. **You could never do.....very man**—you could never imitate him so perfectly in his bad habit ; unless you were he himself. **Ill-well**—with such cruel fidelity.

102. **Here's his dry hand up and down**—that is exactly the way in which he moves his hand up and down—exactly, for all the world, from head to foot. **Dry hand**—bony hand. A dry hand was regarded as the sign of cold disposition, as was a moist hand of a wanton one. **Up and down**—completely.

106. **Can virtue hide itself ?**—'such an excellent quality as your wit, will show itself, however much one may try to conceal it.' **Go to**—a form of encouragement (here) ; usually used with a scornful froce. **Mum**—hush.

107. **Graces**—excellent qualities ; virtue, like murder, will out. **And there's an end**—there is nothing more to be said on the subject.

108. **Told you so**—*i.e.*, that I was disdainful.

110. **Nor will you not**—for emphasis, as is often the case in Shakespearean English.

113. **Hundred Merry Tales**—"Of this popular old jest book

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printed by John Rastell (1517-1533), a fragment containing nearly all the tales, was fortunately discovered by the Rev. J. J. Conybeare some years ago and has been carefully reprinted by Mr. Singer, under the title of "Shakespeare's Jest Book." The stories thus rescued from oblivion, are so sadly deficient in point and sometimes in decency also, that Beatrice might well resent the imputation of having derived her wit from such a source."—(Staunton).

Comment. Beatrice does not seem to know who her partner is (either by gait or by voice), when she encounters Benedick because Benedick is masked while Beatrice is not. Perhaps Benedick pretends as if he is somebody else in order to taunt Beatrice.

115. **What's he ?**—who is he ? This question is a clear proof that Benedick was wearing a mask.

120. **A very dull fool**—a professional jester of jokes at the courts of princes.

121. **Only his gift is.....slanders**—his, only gift is in the invention of such extravagant slanders as cannot be believed in. **Impossible**—extravagant.

Explanation. When Benedick in his masked dress takes mean advantage of his disguise by telling her that all her wit is borrowed form the disreputable work (*The Hundred Merry Tales*), she resents the imputation that she drew her wit from such a source and shrewdly suspects that only Benedick could have told her so. So she hastens to retaliate by telling him that possibly her present partner has heard of a man called Benedick who is the "prince's jester"—a shallow kind of wit, a dull fool which specialises in inventing unbelievable and extravagant slanders—a buffoon and a man of weak morals who loves to indulge in coarse jokes. He is good at bringing down the reputation of others by his slanders.

122. **Libertines**—people who are unscrupulous in their moral conduct. **Commendation**—praise.

123. **Villainy**—by which she (Beatrice) means his malice and impiety. By his impious jests, he insinuates, and he only pleased libertines ; and by his devising slanders of them, he angered them. —(Warburton).

123-24. **For he both pleases men and angers them**—Benedick, the dull fool in the employ of the prince, at first pleases people by inventing false slanders ; but the moment these slanders are brought against them, he makes them angry, so they laugh at him and beat him by turns.

125. **I am sure he is in.....boarded me**—I am sure he is among this company and I wish he had accosted me. **Fleet**—company. **Boarded**—addressed ; accosted.

128-29. **He 'll but break.....on me**—he may break some jest upon me. Breaking a word upon some one means beating him.

130-31. **There's a partridge wing saved**—at its worst the result

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will be that the fool will get away without his supper and his best food (wing of the partridge) will be left behind. "The wing of the pastridge was formerly considered the most delicate part of the bird, as indeed it still is ; but the jest turns not upon the effiminacy of Benedick's appetite, for whose supper such a trifle was sufficient." —(Halliwell).

132. **The leaders**—the leaders in the intricate movements of the dance.

133. **In every good thing**—leaders must be followed in every other particular.

135. **At the next turning**—the next time they turn and come down the room, but with a reference to the commoner use of the phrase, *i. e.*, the next bend in the road.

136. **Sure my brother is amorous on Hero, etc.**—It is a difficult speech to explain with the material in the text we have. John has already been clearly told by Borachio that Hero's lover is Claudio and that Don Pedro is only acting as a persuasive intermediary. One explanation that can, however, be offered is that his remark is a deliberate *Suggestio falsi* meant to reach the ears of Claudio, so that it may create doubt in the jealous mind of Claudio. But this explanation does not hold good in the fact that Don John knows that Claudio is aware about the pretended amorousness of Don Pedro. Why than Don John, a villain, tries to tell a lie to Claudio ? It seems that Shakespeare has not attached much importance to this minor detail of the plot. **Amorous on**—in love with.

137. **To break with him**—to broach the subject to him.

138. **One visor**—one masked person.

139. **Bearing**—carriage ; behaviour.

142. **You are very near.....love**—you are in my brother's confidence in respect of love-affair.

143. **Enamoured on**—enamoured of ; desperately fallen in love with.

Equal for his birth—*i.e.*, in respect of birth.

151-52. **Thus answer I in name.....ear of Claudio**—Claudio soliloquises on the whole affair, as communicated to him by Don John and confirmed by Borachio, and says he has answered Don John and Borachio, in the name of Benedick, even though he has heard the evil news of Don Pedro's bid his intended marriage with Hero with the ears of Claudio.

154-59. **Friendship is constant in all.....melteth into blood**—Claudio laments his foolishness in having employed a third party (Don Pedro) to negotiate in love and moralises on the incostancy of friendship in matters of love, for in love at least no one can be trusted, Even the dearest of friends is apt to be bewitched by beauty and forgets the claims of friendship. Note that Claudio is a very credulous sort of lover. He distrusts the good faith of his friend

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and patron (Don Pedro) at the first blush of suspicion. Even after his doubts in this behalf are dispelled, he lends a willing ear to the same villain and allows himself to be persuaded that his fianancee is guilty of a disgraceful amour with Borachio.

156-58. **Therefore all hearts in love.....trust no agent**—everyone must woo his lady-love for himself. No agent be trusted in matters of love. "Before the witchery of beauty, honour melts into a flood of passion." Thus the greatest faith and trust one has for a friend, would melt and give way to passion. Loyalty will thus be dissolved into sensual passion.

157. **Office**—business.

159. **Against**—in the face of. **Blood**—passion.

160. **Hourly proof**—the truth of this is being demonstrated almost every hour.

161. **Which I mistrust not**—which I ought to have expected, but foolishly did not.

166. **Willow**—an emblem of unhappy love. The tree, called from its drooping branches the "weeping willow", is still, planted in English churchyards over tombstones. It is described as a sad tree, whereof such who have lost their love make their mourning garlands and we know what exiles hang up their harps upon such doleful supporters ; where the reference is to the Jews in captivity.—(D).

168. **Usurer's chain**—chains of gold, of considerable value, were in Shakespeare's time usually worn by wealthy citizens, and others, in the same manner as they now are on public occasions. **Usurer**—one who lends money on interest.

169. **Lieutenant's scarf**—which passed over the right shoulder and under the left arm. **One way**—one way or the other.

172-73. **Spoken like an.....sell bullocks**—spoken like a cattle-dealer ready to get rid of unmanageable beasts. Benedick compares Claudio to a cattle-driver who commends his bullock to prospective buyers very hopefully expecting to dispose it off at a high price, and so to get rid of a restive beast. **Drover**—a driver of cattle. **So they sell bullocks**—*i.e.*, with such a commendation.

176. **Ho ! now to strike like the etc.**—*i.e.*, it is the Duke you ought to be angry with, not me. The reference is to one popular story about a blind man who beat the post when the boy stole his meat.

178. **If it will not be**—if you do not leave me.

179-80 **Into sedges**—into the sedges for concealment, as we should now say, like a wounded wild-fowl seeking to escape the sportsman. Shakespeare knew how difficult it is to dislodge a wounded bird from its hiding-place.

181. **Go under**—am known by.

182-83. **But so I am apt to do myself wrong**—but in believing that I am frequently spoken of as a fool. I show myself too ready (apt) to do myself an injustice : I will not believe that I have this reputation.

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183-85. **I am not so reputed : It is the.....gives me out**—reflecting on Beatrice's description of him as the prince's fool, after the dance, Benedick wonders if he is reputed as such to other people. For a moment he thinks that perhaps such a title was given to him on account of his merry disposition. But the very next moment he abandons the idea and feels sure that he had never such a disposition to earn the title of "prince's fool", and that it was really the mean and bitter disposition of Beatrice that is at the back of it and made her think what she herself thought to be the opinion of the world.

183-84. **It is the base though bitter disposition of Beatrice**—though Beatrice is so bitterly disposed towards me, she does not reflect upon me directly, but contrives with her bitterness the baseness of circulating her own slanders as the common report of the world. —(Singer).

184-85. **That puts the world.....me out**—"assumes to represent the world and thus retort me" ; speaks as if she represented the world's opinion of me.

185. **As I may**—in any way that I can.

188-89. **Have played the part of Lady Fame**—have told him what was currently reported **Lady Fame**—Lady Rumour, "painted full of tongues."

189. **As a lodge in a warren**—as the keeper's house in a place frequented by rabbits, hares etc. **Lodge**—game-keeper's hut. **Warren**—a preserve for rabbits, hares, etc.

190-91. **Had got the good will**—won the love of the young lady of the house.

191-94. **I offered him my company.....worthy to be whipp'd**—I asked him to accompany me to a willow tree, either to help in making a garland of willow leaves for him to mourn the desertion of Hero, or to whip him by means of a birch rod made of several twigs bound up together.

196. **Flat transgression**—downright folly.

199. **Wilt thou make a trust etc.**—will you construe simple faith into a fault ? Will you call my plain loyalty to Claudio a crime ?

199-200. **The transgression is in the stealer**—one commits a folly when one steals something, but instead of stealing Hero I have won her.

201. **Yet**—even if it is not a crime.

203. **Bestowed on you**—a bold speech for Benedick to make to his sovereign.

205-06. **I will but teach them .. ..to the owner**—I do not mean to keep her for myself but having taught her how to answer Claudio, restore her to him. **Them**—used for the young birds in the nest.

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207-08. **If their singing answer.....say honestly**—if her language to Claudio corresponds with what you promise for her, then I will admit that you have dealt fairly with him ; if she accepts Claudio, I shall believe what you say as to your intentions—(D.), *i.e.*, if Hero herself says that you made love to her not on your own account but for Claudio, then only I am prepared to believe that you are speaking the truth.

209. **A quarrel to you**--a difference with you ; a cause of quarrel against you.

210-11. **Much wronged by you**—*i.e.*, by what you had said of her.

212. **Misused**—abused ; misrepresented.

213. **With one green leaf on it**—with any life at all in it ; barely alive.

214-15. **Scold with her**—return her abuse for insulting me.

212-15. **O, she misused me past the endurance..... scold with her**—In these lines Benedick says that had he been a stupid fellow, he could have endured the abuses heaped on him by Beatrice. The caustic remarks made by her on his character are simply unbearable. Even an oak tree seemingly dead to the world, and almost denuded of green leaves would have returned abuse for abuse.

215. **Not thinking I had been myself**—though, of course, Beatrice knew all the while that she was talking to Benedick. Is it true that Beatrice was completely unaware of the fact that she was talking to Benedick at the masked ball ?

216. **Duller than a great thaw etc.**—more gloomy than the weather in a heavy thaw when the skies are thick with clouds. **A great thaw**—melting of ice formed during winter. It is accompanied by fog and dull weather. The comparison here is not apt, and certainly not in harmony with the climate of Messina. The change in the weather (winter) in England induces languor, not dulness. It may be noted that Beatrice does not say anything in regard to the weather in the conversation reported here in.

217. **Huddling jest upon jest etc.**—one jest followed another in incredible profusion that he felt himself like a man shot at with deadly weapons. **Impossible conveyance**—incredible dexterity.

219. **She speaks poniards**—every word was like a stab-wound

220. **If her breath**—reference to foul breath is not uncommon in Shakespeare.

221. **Terminations**—expression ; phrases. Benedick means, "If her breath were as horribly foul as her invective, there would be no living in the same world where she lives."

221-22. **She would infect to the north star**—if her breath were as infectious as her words, it would be impossible to live near her, and her infection would extend as far as the North Star.

223. **Had left him**—still possessed before Adam committed the first act of disobedience.

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222-23. **I would not marry her.....before he transgressed**—even if she had all the qualities, wealth and happiness, which Adam had in the Garden of Eden, he would not marry Beatrice as she was such a shrew. (But ultimately he marries her ; this is a dramatic irony).

224. **Made Hercules have turn'd spit**—engaged Hercules in some menial occupation. **Spit**—an iron prong on which meat is roasted.

224-26. **She would have made Hercules have.....in good apparel**—her taunting words are so bitter that even Hercules would have been defeated and enslaved by her. A termagent shrew like her would have broken his club into pieces to make fire with. As a matter of fact, Beatrice is a veritable goddess of war herself, came straight from hell though dressed in good clothes.

226. **The infernal Ate**—the hellish goddess of strife and discord.

226-27. **I would to God.....conjure her**—as Shakespeare always attributes to his exorcists the power of raising spirits, he gives his conjurer, in this place, the power of laying them.—(Mason). **Scholar**—because Latin was used in exorcisms. How I wish some scholar who is also an exorcist, would lay the wicked spirit that has possessed Beatrice.

227-28. **For certainly, while she.....is in a sanctuary**—"That is, to live in hell would be as quiet as live in a sanctuary, compared to living where she is, and people sin on purpose in order to escape her in that way."—(Rolfe), and live rather quietly in hell, where living conditions are bearable without her presence. Benedick means to say that "she makes a hell of earth, therefore I wish some exorcist would send her back to hell, otherwise, hell without her would be as quiet as a sanctuary, and people will deliberately sin to go there, for she is not there to cause any disorder to them."

235. **Toothpicker**—tooth-pick (an evidenc of a much-travelled man) **From the furthest inch of Asia**—from the remotest corner of Asia.

236. **Prester John's foot**—'Prester' or 'Presbyter' John was a mythical Christian King of India. Some say that he was king of Abyssinia. It is said that nobody dared to look upon his person which was kept in close disguise in order that he may not be too cheap for vulgar eyes.

237. **The Great Cham**—the king of Tartar which was then in a semi-savage condition, where no respect to human life was shown by the inhabitants. Benedick is prepared to undertake the journey to the most dangerous kingdoms to avoid Beatrice and her tongue. **The Pigmies**—a mythical race of dwarfs, supposed to dwell beyond Mount Imaus in India.

238. **This harpy**—who would be as ready to tear one's face with her nails as the harpies to clutch at food with their claws—. (D.) Harpies were said to be fabulous creatures, half women and half birds, said to have carried off the food of the blind old prophet

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Phineus. In the *Tempest*, Ariel impersonates a 'harpy' to eat away the food which being served.

240. **None but to desire your good company**—none, except to hope that you will continue to give us the pleasure of your company ; which invitation Benedick in order to escape Beatrice, hastily declines, and leaves the hall.—(D.)

241-42. **Here's a dish I love not.....Lady—Tongue**—though I like the tongue of oxen, I do not relish her tongue. *N. B.* The tongue of oxen is a favourite dish or article of food in Europe. **My Lady Tongue**—Benedick's third form of addressing Beatrice. He has already used 'Lady Disdain' and 'Lady Fame before.'

245-48. **Indeed my lord, he lent.....I have lost it**—Beatrice admits that she once had Benedick's heart, though only as a loan, but she says, she had given at back to him with interest, her own heart as well as his (with a quibble on the word 'double', *i.e.*, deceitful). She goes on, "your grace may well say I have lost it, *i.e.*, this double heart, for my part in it he won by false pertences."—(D.) Another interpretation : "Yes, I have lost his heart indeed, for taking advantage of his disguise he opened his heart very freely, calling me disdainful, cheap-witted and so forth ; but I gave him his own with interest, a double heart full of plain speaking for his single one ; for she gave twice as much as he gave. Once before he did the same sort of thing, in the same false way. You may well say I have lost his heart, for he is not likely to play this game again." —(Sampson).

246. **Use**—interest. **A double heart**—his heart and my heart —a *double* and therefore *deceitful* heart. Beatrice says that he had a double heart instead of a single one but the way in which he had won her heart was by deceitful means, just as a player wins his points by making use of false dice.

247. **With false dice**—by false play.

248. **Have lost it**—have lost the heart of Benedick.

250. **Have put him down**—have overthrown him. The metaphor is from wrestling.

251. **So I would not.....my lord**—but I must not wish that he would overthrow me in the way he did, my lord.

259. **Civil as an orange**—'civil' here seems to mean, neither one thing nor the other, neither sad nor merry, neither sick nor well, but like the Seville orange (which is both bitter and sweet) something between the two, a mixture of both.—(D.)

260. **Jealous complexion**—in reference to the yellow rind of the orange, yellow (or green) being the colour of complexion especially looked upon as indicative of jealousy.—(D)

261. **Blazon**—description. **I think you blazon to be true**—I take your description of Claudio to be true ; that you have displayed him in his right colours that his complexion is yellow or jealous.

265. **God give thee joy**—the traditional marriage wish.

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267. **My fortunes**—all my earthly possession, she being my sole heir. **All grace**—*i.e.*, God.

269. **Your cue**—your turn. *Cue* is the last word of an actor's speech serving as a hint to the next speaker.

270. **Herald**—publisher.

271. **As you are mine**—I am as entirely yours as you are mine.

272-73. **Dote upon the exchange**—I am much delighted to have you in exchange for what I have given you.

277-78. **It keeps on the windy side of care**—my heart keeps on the side away from that on which care is flowing so that care cannot scent and find it.—(Schmidt). Vessels on the windward side get the first advantage of any breeze as it springs up.

281. **Good Lord for alliance**—two explanations are suggested : (1) "Heaven send me a husband," says Beatrice ironically : (2) "Good Lord, Claudio calls me 'cousin' : so here have I got a new kinsman by marriage."

281-82. **Thus goes every one to the world**—thus everyone is going to get married. 'Go to the world' means that they should follow the way of the world to marry and beget children.

282. **Sun-burnt**—tanned by the sun and so not likely to attract a man's love ; homely-looking.

283. **Cry heigh-ho for a husband**—"thus everyone enters matrimony while I am sulking and moping in a corner to remain single, singing for a husband." 'Heigh-ho' is the title of an old ballad—an interjection expressive of disappointment. This means maids willing to marry want to be made known.

285. **Getting**—begetting, *i.e.*, one of those begotten by your father.

286. **Ne'er a brother**—not even one brother.

287. **If a maid could come by them**—'if only it were possible for a girl like me to get one of them as a husband.'

288. **Will you have me**—it is not a serious talk, for Pedro is already married.

289-90. **For working-days**—*i e.*, keeping you for Sundays and holidays only, like a fine garment.

290. **Your grace is too costly to wear every day**—Beatrice declines the offer of marriage from Don Pedro with the remark that the prince is like a costly ornament, which cannot be worn everyday.

292. **Matter**—that which is material, substantial. I beg to be excused by your Grace for my somewhat free utterances.

297. **A star danced**—Wright says, "the sun was supposed to do so on Easter Day."

301. **I cry you mercy.....grace's pardon**—excuse me please for leaving you now.

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Comment. Beatrice is full of mirth in all her talk which sparkles with flashes of wit. We see her affectionate heart in this scene. She is no longer the sharp-tongued lady. "Cousins, God give you joy," says she in the fullness of heart, and when she leaves the scene, she diffuses the atmosphere of her affectionate gaiety.

303. **The melancholy element**—of the four elements out of which all created things were supposed to be formed, earth and water were the slower ones, fire and water to the quicker ones ; and melancholy is ascribed to heart.—(D.)

304. **She is never sad but when she sleeps**—she is never melancholy for a long time even in her sleep.

304-05. **And not ever sad then**—though she is apt to dream of sad thoughts or deeds for a few minutes, she is sure to burst into laughter.

306. **Unhappiness**—mischievous tricks ; roguery. It means that she is so little given to sadness that even in her dreams she laughs away unhappiness.

308-09. **Out of suit**—out of courtship. **Mock all her wooers out of suit**—she is apt to scare away her suitors by mockery.

313-14. **Go to church**—to be married.

315-16. **Time goes on crutches.....his rites**—time goes at a snail's pace for a lover anxious to get married to his lady-love. The interim period between the contract of marriage and the date it is solemnized, is covered by the rites or formalities of marriage.

318. **A just seven-night**—exactly a week.

319. **Answer my mind**—correspond with my wishes ; be carried out with due pomp and ceremony.

321. **Breathing**—a breathing space ; delay.

324. **Mountain of affection**—very great affection.

326-27. **Minister such assistance.....you direction**—lend me help in such a way as I shall direct you.

328. **I am for you**—I am ready to join with you in the plot.

328-29. **Ten nights, watching**—remaining awake for ten nights in succession.

332. **Any modest office**—anything that a modest maiden may do ; humble duty.

334. **The unhopefullest husband**—the worst husband.

335. **Strain**—lineage ; descent.

336. **Approved**—proved or tried. **Confirmed**—well-founded. **Honesty**—labour.

338. **Your two helps**—the help of you two. **Practise**—play tricks.

339. **Queasy stomach**—fastidious taste. A reference to his dislike of woman.

342. **My drift**—my plan.

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Act II : Scene II

Summary

We have seen that Don Pedro has loyally fulfilled the pleasant task of winning Hero for the sake of Claudio and that Leonato has consented to proffer Hero all his fortunes after their marriage. And now that amiable prince is about to embark on his Herculean labour of bringing Benedick and Beatrice into a mountain of affection, the one with the other. In the meantime, Don John, foiled of his first attempt at mischief now seeks to ruin Claudio's happiness with the help of his accomplice, Borachio. When the former (Don John) communicates to the latter (Borachio) the news that Claudio is betrothed to Hero, the latter says that he could cross it, as he has a plan ready with him. He is already intimate with Margaret, the waiting-woman of Hero. He now proposes to make her look out at Hero's chamber at an unseasonable hour of the night, while he himself hold conversation with her from beneath. If Don John could so contrive to poison the mind of Claudio and the prince that Hero had a secret lover who met her at night, the sight of the secret conversation between Borachio and Margaret would appear to Claudio and the prince an ocular proof of Hero's disloyalty. Don John is delighted with this scheme of Borachio to spoil the happiness of Claudio and the intended bride Hero, and encourages Borachio with the offer of a reward of one thousand ducats. Borachio now proposes to put this plan into effect forthwith.

Dramatic Importance

This scene is intended to complicate the plot further by introducing the second plot of Don John, who, foiled in his first attempt in the previous scene, adopts a more desperate means to ruin the happiness of Claudio. "It is the part of the machinery of the play and the machinery here creaks a little." Evidently, Shakespeare in his anxiety to paint the Iago-like motiveless malignity, Don John, makes a mess of his sources, *viz.*, the stories of Ariosto and Bandello. Shakespeare is following Ariosto in the matter of Margaret's impersonation of Hero. But in Shakespeare Margaret is represented as a well-meaning innocent and faithful servant of Hero, whereas in Ariosto the villain (Borachio) is the disappointed lover of the heroine, and the maid-servant of Hero is the villain's mistress. This part of the play is full of improbabilities, which lends colour to the view that is imperfectly and carelessly constructed.

NOTES

1-2. **It is so ; the count.....daughter of Leonato**—This matter (that of Count Claudio marrying the daughter of Leonato) has now been settled.

3. **Cross**—thwart ; prevent.

5. **Medicinable**—medicinal ; as beneficial as the effect of medicine.

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Comment. Don John detests the count and whatever comes athwart the affections of his enemy would gratify him. Anything likely to stand in the way of the fulfilment of his wishes, is welcome to Don John.

Displeasure—hatred. **To**—towards.

6. **Comes athwart**—stands in the way of fulfilment of wishes. **Affection**—desire.

6-7. **Ranges evenly with mine**—is perfectly in accord with my desire.

8. **Honestly**—by fair means. **Covertly**—secretly.

12. **In the favour of**—in love with. **Waiting-gentlewoman**—an attendant something above an ordinary maid-servant, as the freedom in conversation permitted her by her mistress whould show.

15. **Any unseasonable instant**—any time in the night, however, late.

16. **Appoint her**—make an appointment with her.

17. **What life is.....of this marriage**—how can you think that Margaret's looking out of Hero's window at the unseasonable hour of the night will be strong enough to stop this marriage ?

18. **The poison of that.....to temper**—it is up to you to mix poison with it so as to make it very effective. **Temper**—mingle ; mix so as to be efficacious.

Comment. Borachio means that the dissolution of the marriage depends upon the way in which Don John is going to compound this incident and present it to others. Borachio is really the brain behind this second plot against Hero and Claudio. His is the original mind. Even when Borachio gives the hint, Don John is unable to visualise the mischief planned by the former. He has little imagination. He is only a smaller edition of Iago in spontaneous malice and "motiveless malignity".

21. **Estimation**—esteem ; just reputation ; merit.

21-22. **Contaminated stale**—damned harlot; an unchaste woman.

23. **What proof shall I make of that ?**—how shall I substantiate me words ?

25. **Misuse**—mislead ; deceive. **Vex**—distress ; harass.

25. **Undo**—perplex; ruin. **Look you for**—do you desire any, etc.

27. **To despite**—to annoy. For this verb we now use spite, though the substantive is common enough in the adverbial phrase 'in despite of' or 'despite of'.

28. **Find me**—find a fitting time to draw me—this is what Borachio means.

30. **Intend**—pretend.

31. **As**—as 'that you have discovered' ; a zeal 'which has led you to this discovery'. **In love of your brother's honour etc.**—indicates Don John's love for his brother, Pedro, and also his brother's friends' reputation.

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33. **Cozened**—cheated.

35. **Without trial**—without making trial : investigation. **Instances**—corroborative circumstances ; proofs.

35-36. **Which shall bear no less likelihood**—'which shall have all the appearance of truth in so far that they shall see me at her chamber-window' etc.

37. **Claudio**—Claudio would naturally be enraged to find his mistress Hero (for such he would imagine Margaret to be) address Borachio, or any other man by his name, as he might suppose that she called him by the name of Claudio in consequence of secret agreement between them as a cover, in case she were overheard : and he would know, without a possibility of error, that it was not Claudio with whom, in fact, she conversed.'—(Malone). The very expression 'term me' shows that the speaker assumes that Margaret, by connivance, would call him by the name of Claudio—(Knight). Probably Margaret was persuaded to do so, or it might be in fun to be called herself as Hero and addressed Borachio as Claudio.

41. **Truth**—true proofs. **Disloyalty**—unchastity ; unfaithfulness in love.

41-42. **That jealousy shall be call'd.....overthrown**—'that what would otherwise be regarded as mere suspicion will then be looked upon as something clearly established, and the preparations for the wedding will be at an end.'—(D.) **Jealousy**—suspicion against Hero's character. **Assurance**—something definitely established.

43. **Grow this to what etc.**—let this plot have whatever result it may. I will not shrink from carrying it out to the end—**Grow this**—let this grow.

44. **In the working this**—in the working of this : in working this.

45. **Ducats**—a Venetian coin, which was both of silver and gold. 'Its frequent use by Shakespeare and in Elizabethan literature shows how widespread was the commerce of Venice in those days.' It is difficult to assign an exact value to it.

46. **Be you constant in the accusation**—if you do not allow your courage to fail you when you make the accusation, but adhere to it firmly, you will find that I on my part shall not be wanting in my cunning—(D.)

48. **Presently**—atonce.

Act II : Scene III

Summary

The interim period intervening between the actual betrothel and marriage of Claudio and Hero, is proposed to be filled up by some artful scheme to make Beatrice and Benedick fall in love with each other. The inevitable match-maker, Don Pedro, suggests that Claudio, Leonato and Balthazar should assist him in hitting

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upon some scheme by which Benedick may be made to believe that Beatrice is in love with him ; on the other hand, it is also arranged that Hero and Ursula are to make Beatrice believe that Benedick is in love with her.

The scene is placed in Leonato's orchard where Benedick is found soliloquising on the recent foolishness of Claudio's unaccountable love for Hero. This was the very man who never bothered himself about love and who spent all his time in material sports. Who could ever have thought that such a man should now be victimised by love ? Benedick doubtfully asks himself at this strange transformation of Claudio, "Is it possible that I should ever be so changed ?" and is unable to answer himself with a definite 'No'. But he is positive that unless a woman is rich, virtuous, wise, fair, mild, good at pleasant talk and musically-minded, he is not going to budge from the position taken up by him. At this stage when Don Pedro, Leonato, Claudio and Balthazar enter on the scene, Benedick hides himself behind an arbour to overhear their talk, but he is, none the less observed by the prince and his companions, totally unaware of the fact that they had come on purpose to entrap him.

Balthazar begins with a song on the changeful nature of men's love. This is much appreciated by the prince who asks him to get ready for some music that night at Hero's chamber-window. On the departure of Balthazar, the prince begins to work the scheme to entrap Benedick. Leonato talks about Beatrice's having fallen passionately in love with Benedick, about her unavailing attempt to write love-letters to him and wearing her heart out in disappointment lest Benedick can be brought to love her. This is confirmed by Claudio. They are agreed that love has taken possession of her so much that they are afraid that she would die in grief or do some desperate outrage to herself. The prince deplores the masculine vanity of Benedick. Leonato thinks that it is impossible to bring Benedick to love her. Claudio says, "Benedick would but make sports of it and torment the poor lady worse." "And if he should", says the prince, "it were a good deed to hang him ; for Beatrice is an excellent sweet lady, and exceedingly wise in everything, but in loving "Benedick". After setting mischief at work, the plotters depart, certain of the effect they have produced on Benedick.

When he is left alone in his arbour, he has already sang 'The swan song of the bachelor' in his first soliloquy in which he has defined the terms on which he is prepared to give up his single-blessedness. The soliloquy at the end of the scene shows up the disturbed state of his mind before finally turning out to be a champion of love and matrimony.

Benedick is now convinced that Beatrice is indeed in love with him and that there is no other way out except to requite her love. No sooner has he made up his mind, than Beatrice herself appears before him to invite him to dinner. In spite of her usual tartness and raillery, Benedick interprets everything that falls from her lips

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in the light of the present state of his mind, and he concludes saying, "If I do not take pity on her, I am a villain. If I do not love her, I am a Jew. I will go get her picture."

Dramatic Significance

The main purpose of the scene is to advance the plot of the prince Don Pedro, by which the two chief characters (Benedick and Beatrice) are to be deluded into the belief that each is in love with the other. The two soliloquies prepare us for the case with which the 'obstinate heretic in the dispite of beauty is ultimately on his way to be transformed into a champion of love and matrimony. Dramatic irony is employed in the soliloquy because the audience knows that Benedick is to be so transformed in spite of his protestations to the contrary.

NOTES

3. **Chamber-window**—the recess of the window of his bedroom.

4. **Orchard**—garden.

5. **I am here already, sir**—*i.e.*, consider it done already, or I shall be gone and back again in an instant. In Quartos and folios, the 'exit' is placed at the end of the boy's speech. But perhaps Benedick's speech is a long prose speech, the printers would not break it with 'exit'.

9. **Dedicates his behaviours**—"wholly gives himself up in all his actions, gestures etc., to love possibly a sarcastic imitation of the absurd euphuism which is satirised in '*Love's Labour's Lost*'. We no longer use 'behaviour' in the plural."—(D) Benedick says : "It is really very surprising that a person who laughs at another for the foolishness of falling in love, should himself be victimised by love." He then pertinently asks : "It is possible that I should ever be so changed ? Possibly not." There is already in Benedick an apprehension that sooner or later he himself may fall in love and undergo such a transformation. **Behaviour**—deportments.

10. **Shallow follies**—the light-hearted frivolities of love.

11. **Argument**—subject matter.

12-13. **No music with him**—no music that was acceptable to him, nothing musical to his ears except martial music, as he is essentially a practical soldier.

13. **The drum and the fife**—musical instruments used in war.

14. **The tabor and the pipe**—such instrument, as were used with dancing and revelry than those used in war. **Tabor**—a small drum, (the modern form is 'tambourine').

15. **Ten mile**—the distance of ten miles. *N. B.* The use of 'ten' at both the places, for 'mile' and 'nights', is to maintain harmony. **Armour**—suit of armour.

16. **Carving the fashion**—designing the shape and style.

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16-17. **And now will he lie.....new doublet**—and now he will himself keep for awake for ten nights, visualising in his mind the shape, style and form of a new (inner) garment. **Doublet**—an inner garment which served, so to speak, as a lining or doublet to the outer one ; a coat often elaborately cut and embroidered.

19. **Orthography** – orthographer ; here one who uses fine words and phrases. The idea is rather fantastical, as, sometimes, we say that "he talks like a dictionary."

19-20. **His words are a very.....dishes**—he simply revels in a feast of fine words, feeding upon 'alms-basket' of strange scraps, borrowed from many languages and making use of fantastic phrases. What a transformation ! *Cf. Love's Labour's Lost*, Act V, Sc. i. where Moth comments ; "They have been at a great feast of languages, and stolen the scraps.

20-21. **May I be so converted and see with these eyes ?**—Benedick wonders whether there would come a time when he would also make a fool of himself, and see things with the spectacles of the transformed Claudio. Is it possible that I should ever be so changed ? This shows Benedick's fear and it is evident from the fact that he does not admit his fear.

22. **To an oyster**—to anything in the world, fish or flesh. An oyster is a well-known bivalve shell-fish, with a mouth but no head.

23. **Till he have made an oyster of etc.**—till love (Cupid) produces the impossible change of converting me from a human being into an oyster, *i.e.*, till the impossible happens.

24-25. **Yet I am well**—yet I am in no way affected by the fact that I am uptil now fancy-free (lover of women).

27. **Come in my grace**—find favour with me.

28. **Or I'll none**—*i.e.*, of her, having nothing to say to her. **Cheapen**—bid for her ; try to purchase her.

29. **Or come not near me**—or let her not come near me.

29-30. **Noble, or not I for an angel**—'I will not marry her even if she be an angel' and 'even if I were given an angel (worth 10 shillings), to do so'. 'Noble' is a coin worth about 6s. 8d. (A pun on 'Noble' and 'Angel'—both being also names of coins).

31. **Her hair shall be.....God**—Benedick is indifferent to the colour of hair his wife might have. Perhaps the allusion is to the practice of wearing false hair or dyeing of hair satirized by Shakespeare, *Cf. Twelfth Night* Act I, Sc. v, where Viola says to Olivia, "Excellently done, if God did all."

32. **Monsieur Love**—Count Claudio, now in love with Hero. **Arbour**—a shady retreat.

37. **The music ended**—when the music is over.

38. **We 'll fit the kid-fox with a penny worth**—'we will give him his money's worth ; we will give him the best of the bargain' ; 'we will play upon him, the trifling trick we have hit upon'. This, however, has a reference to the story of the Kid and the Fox (fold)

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in Spenser's *Shepherd's Calendar*—May), the Kid for all his conceit, being deceived and carried off by the Fox. **Kid fox**—a game like hide and seek in which one person (fox) hides and the rest look for him. (Later emendation reads 'hid-fox'). **Penny-worth**—a trifle.

40. **Tax not**—do not impose a burden upon. **Tax not so bad a voice**—do not tax a bed voice to do injustice twice to a good voice.

41. **Slander**—disgrace.

42. **Witness**—proof. **Still**—ever.

43. **To put a strange face**—'to pretend to be ignorant, possibly with a reference to the pretended ignorance of unwilling witness in a court of law.' **His**—its. **To put a strange face on his own perfection**—to make it appear that he has not got a perfect voice and yet in reality he does possess it.

44. **Woo**—entreat ; beg.

46-47. **Since many a wooer doth.....yet he woos**—'since you act very like many a wooer who begins and continues to woo one whom he nevertheless does not think more worthy of being loved than you in reality think me worthy of being asked to sing.'—(*D*). **Yet he woos**—still he courts her.

48. **Yet will he swear he loves**—still he swears he loves her.

50. **Notes**—music. **Note this before my notes**—observe this before I sing my music.

N. B. The pun upon the word 'note' in the sense of 'observe' and 'notes' in the sense of 'musical sounds'.

51. **There's not a note of.....the noting**—there is not a musical sound of mine which deserves to be observed.

52. **Crochets**—musical sounds ; quibbles.

N. B. There is a pun here upon 'noting' and 'nothing'. 'Note' is used in the sense of 'observe and of 'musical sound'. 'For sooth' means 'in sooth', 'in truth', 'certainly'. In 'noting' there is a pun on 'nothing' in the sense of 'nothing', pronounced '*noting*'.

54. **Divine air**—divine tune. (It is a quotation.) **Ravished**—enraptured ; delighted.

55. **Sheeps' guts**—the strings of the violin : what we now call 'catgut', though in reality they have always been made from the intestines of sheep or calves. **Should hale souls out**—should draw souls (out of men's bodies). **Hale**—to draw forcefully.

56. **A horn for my money**—give me in preference a horn. This indicates that Benedick is no lover of chamber-music. **When all's done**—'when all's said and done'—after all.

57. **Sigh**—weep.

63. **Blithe and bonny**—gay and healthy ; bright and merry.

64-65. **Converting all your.....nonny**—exchanging all your sighs for the refrain of a merry song, occurring in a song called "The Shepherd's Lamentation for the Loss of His Love." *Cf.* Ophelia's song in *Hamlet* (IV. v) or *As You Like It* (V. iii).

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66. **Ditties**—sad songs. **Moe**—'mo' (or 'moe') and 'more' were used as comparatives of 'many' in Elizabethan English, as against 'moe' in modern English ; 'Mo' refers to number and 'more' to size.

67. **Dumps**—melancholy subjects. Shakespeare uses the word in the sense of 'a melancholy strain in music' or 'low spirits'.

69. **Leavy**—leafy. This is the form always used by Shakespeare. It is necessary here for rhyming with 'heavy' (above.)

71. **By my troth**—truly.

73-74. **For a shift**—you are better than nothing, your singing will do at a pinch, in the absence of a good singer.

75. **An he had him a dog etc.**—if he had been a dog etc.

77. **Bode no mischief**—as the howling of a dog at night would.

77-78. **I had as lief have heard.....came after it**—I would as soon hear the bittern's note whatever it may presage. **Night-raven**—the owl or the night-heron, superstitiously supposed to be followed by some sad event. *Cf.* Goldsmith's reference to this in his '*Animated Nature*'. This is clear from the following passages :

(i) "The croaking raven doth bellow for revenge."—*Hamlet.*

(ii) "The raven himself is hoarse that croaks the fatal entrance of Dimean under my battlements". —*Macbeth.*

75-78. **An he had been a dog.....came after it**—Benedick is unable to stand the sentiment expressed in the song of Balthazar, *viz.*, faithlessness of men in love. He thinks Balthazar should be hanged for this outrageous song, which is objectionable and revolting to his ears, like the howling of a dog at night. He hopes that bad voice which uttered the song did not presage any harm to anybody like the howling of a dog at night or the hooting of an owl. He would be more willing to hear the night-raven, foreboding death and disaster.

79. **Dost thou hear Balthazar ?**—don't you feel the need of giving us some gay music for this occasion (at the chamber-window of Hero).

82. **The best**—I will get the best music I am capable of.

82-85. **That your niece**—*i.e.*, as to Beatrice being in love etc.

86. **O ay, stalk on.....sits**—go on talking like that, for Benedick is all attention to you. **Stalk on etc.**—Claudio means to say that Benedick (the bird) is in the proper position to be captured by the fowlers (Leonato and Don Pedro). Fowlers used to shelter themselves, from the sight of the bird they were about to catch, behind a stalking horse (consisting of a painted cloth, shaped like a horse with the head bent down to resemble a horse which is grazing) ; '*a stalking horse* is a horse either real or fictitious, by which the fowler anciently sheltered himself from the sight of the game.'—(Steevens), **The fowl sits**—the wild fowl (Benedick) is sitting near.

89. **Dote on**—be enamoured of.

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89-90. **In all outward behaviour**—in all external conduct.

91. **Sits the wind in that corner ?**—is that the way the wind blows ? Is that how matters stand ?

93. **Enraged affection**—mad or violent passion.

94. **Past the infinite of thought**—beyond the power of thought. **Infinite**—depth which cannot be plumbed.

97-99. **There was never counterfeit.....as she discovers it**—never had pretended love resembled the reality of love, as she has revealed it. **Counterfeit**—pretend. **Came**—that came. **The life of passion**—the reality of love. **Discovers**—reveals, shows.

100. **Effects**—results outwardly manifested themselves.

101. **Bait the hook well.....bite**—Claudio is supposed as before to be watching Benedick's behavior. Benedick (the fish) is about to bite the bait and fall into the trap laid for him.

102. **She will sit you**—'you may see how she will sit in the moody way daughter just now described.'

106. **Invincible**—proof.

110. **A gull**—a trick.

110-12. **I should think this a gull.....in such reverence**—when Benedick overhears the conversation between Don Pedro, Claudio and Leonato about Beatrice's passionate love for him, from his hiding-place in the bower of Leonato's garden, it does not appear to him that the men are playing a practical trick upon him. Of course he has his suspicions about the light-hearted nature of Don Pedro and Claudio. But the fact that Leonato himself with his white beard, joins in the conversation, makes him think that the report about Beatrice's passion might be true. Surely the white-bearded fellow could not certainly utter falsehood. **Reverence**—reverent appearance.

113. **Hold it up**—keep up the jest, the plot has already begun to work.

116-17. **That's her torment**—*i.e.*, her determination, never to tell her love, is what makes her suffering so great.

119. **Says she**—says Beatrice to Hero, your daughter.

123. **Smock**—night-dress ; chemise.

122-24. **And there will she sit in her.....sheet of paper**—and there she will sit up in her night-dress till she has written out a sheet of paper.

129. **That**—(Claudio says) yes, that is it.

130. **Thousand halfpence**—a thousand fragment as small as halfpence. **Halfpence**—pieces of the same bigness.

131. **So immodest to write**—Beatrice tears her love-latter addressed to Benedick into pieces, vailing at herself that she should be so immodest as to write to one that, she knew, would flout her.

132. **Measure**—appraise.

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133. **I should**—I should flout him, as he does the same to me.

133-34. **I should flout him.....him I should**—in these words Leonato overstates the depth of passion of Beatrice for Benedick. That Beatrice should indulge in these things is incredible. But such is Benedick's unfathomable vanity that he is easily duped into believing every word of it.

136. **Curses**—adjurations or request under penalty or curse. Beatrice charges Benedick to love her under the penalty of a curse.

139. **Ecastasy**—passionate outburst or madness ; deep love.

142-43. **Knew of it by some other**—were informed of it by some other.

143. **Discover**—reveal.

146. **An alms**—a charitable deed.

147. **Out of all suspicion**—beyond all possibility of doubt.

151. **Blood**—passion, Shakespeare has used a similar expression in *Hamlet*—'Blood and judgement'—Hamlet's speech to Horatio (Act III, sc. ii).

155. **This dotage**—this rich heritage of violent love.

156. **Daffed**—put aside all other considerations, such as his birth and high position. (=do off).

162-63. **Rather than she will bate.....crossness**—rather than lessen her obstinate opposition to love and marriage by a jot or little.

163. **Crossness**—perverseness or opposition.

164. **Make tender**—offer it voluntarily.

166. **Contempitible**—scornful ; mocking.

167. **Proper**—handsome.

168. **A good outward happiness**—he has an attractive exterior ; he is happy, fortunate, so far as externals go ; has a prepossessing appearance, that is, he is handsome.

171. **Like wit**—like wisdom.

173. **As Hector**—as brave as Hector, the son of Priam, in the Trojan War. He was the chief champion of the Trojans, who met his death at the hands of Achilles, to whose chariot his body was tied dragged to the Greek camp.

180. **And so will he do**—being a God-fearing man and a lover of peace, he will enter into the fight with fear, (said of course in order to pique Benedick).

181. **Howsoever it seems etc.**—howsoever much it might appear to the contrary, judging from the language he sometimes uses.' **Large**—broad ; coarse.

184. **Wear it out**—efface it from her mind gradually. **It**—her passion.

184-85. **Let her wear in out with good counsel**—let her efface from her mind her passion solely by wise reflection.

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185. **Counsel**—reflection ; it means her own judgment.

186-87. **May wear her heart out first**—would kill herself first.

188. **By**—from.

189. **Let it cool the while**—let the matter rest for the time being.

190-91. **Much he is unworthy**—he is greatly unworthy.

N. B. At this stage the actors in the scene move away from Benedick's place of concealment, and he, of course, does not hear the rest of their talk.

193. **Upon this**—in consequence of what he has heard from us.

193-94. **I will never trust my expectation**—I will not trust my forecasts any more.

195. **Let there be the same net spread for her**—let the same trap be laid to victimise Beatrice also.

196. **Carry**—carry out ; contrive.

197. **One an opinion**—each one an opinion of ; belief in the other's excessive love.

198. **And no such matter**—while in reality nothing of the kind exists.

198-99. **That's the scene that I would see**—I would love to see the scene and it will be an entirely dumb-show ; for both will be too obstinate to utter a word of their real feelings due to obstinacy.

199. **A dumb show**—because both of them will be afraid to speak first, rather feel shy.

202. **Conference**—conversation. **Was sadly borne**—was seriously conducted. **Have the truth of this**—have obtained and possess the truth of this.

204. **Have their full bent**—are at their greatest tension. **Love me ?.....requited**—since she is so desperately fond of me, I must love her in return.

205. **Censured**—judged. **I will bear**—that I am certain to bear—I confess to myself that I am not going to feel proud if I somehow feel she is in love with me.

208-09. **There detractions**—what is said in disparagement of them. **To mending**—to correction.

211. **Reprove**—disprove ; deny.

212. **Wit**—wisdom. **Argument**—proof.

213. **For I will be horribly in love with her**—for it is no great proof of her folly that she loves me for I will show that I fully return the feeling of love.

214. **Quirks and remnants of wit**—jests and stale quotations of witty sayings. **Broken on men**—inflicted on me.

216. **The meant**—it may be interpreted for some special dish or variety.

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217. **Quips and sentences**—jests and sententious sayings (maxim).

217-18. **These paper bullets of the brain**—these shafts of wit that are as harmless as bullets made of paper would be.

218-19. **Awe a man from the career of his humour**—frighten a man out of his wishes. **Humour**—wishes.

217-19. **Shall quips and sentences, and.....must be peopled**—'A man is not to be bound to his smart jokes and wise saws and sallies of witty remarks coming out of his brain. If all men despise marriage like this, how is the world going to be peopled? In this way, Benedick finally decides to marry.'

219-21. **When I said I would die.....till I were married**—this is how Benedick concludes—there is no way but to return her love. It is true he has railed against marriage. What of that? A man should not be deterred from his inmost desires merely by 'quips and sentences and these paper bullets of brain.' "When I said I would die a bachelor I did not think I should live till I were married". Arguing in this way he now thinks marriage a definite possibility.

222. **Some marks of love**—*i.e.*, in the manner in which she comes to meet him.

226. **For those thanks**—to win those thanks.

226-28. **I took no more pains.....would not have come**—though there is no indication of a change of heart in Beatrice's speech, Benedick construes it in such a manner that he thinks she is in love with him. She plainly says she has taken no pains in coming to inform him to attend the dinner, but he construes it in such a way that he now feels she takes positive pleasure in inviting him.

230-31. **Upon a knife's point**—a very small quantity, *i.e.*, very little.

231. **Daw**—crow. **No stomach**—no appetite.

236-37. **Any pains that I take.....as thanks**—even though Beatrice extends the invitation to dinner in her usual tone of sarcasm. Benedick interprets of a different meaning to her words in the light of the present state of his mind. Before leaving the scene he declares that he should love her in the interests of love and humanity.

238. **A jew**—a term of contempt.

239. **Picture**—likeness.

ACT III : SCENE I

Summary

This scene is a counterpart of the previous scene. It shows the working of the plot against Beatrice. It is now the turn of Hero to put into operation in the same place—the arbour in Leonato's garden. Her accomplices are her two waiting-women, *viz.*, Margaret and Ursula.

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Hero asks Margaret to run to Beatrice and ask her if she is interested in overhearing a talk about her in which Hero and Ursula are whispering to each other. When Margaret goes to inform Beatrice about this, Hero tells Ursula about her own part in the plot which is to paint a very flattering picture of Benedick hopelessly in love with Beatrice, *viz.*, admittedly the best young man in Italy, wise, noble, valiant, young and rarely featured in body, while Beatrice remains concealed in a bower. Then they (Hero and Ursula) are to add that Beatrice is so self-endearded that she will tend to turn every man the wrong side out, and make good qualities appear as if they are bad. Hero would then add that it is useless to tell Beatrice about Benedick's passionate love for her in such circumstances. This plan is implemented in actual practice as Beatrice steals behind them in the garden, with the result that she swallows 'the false sweet bait' completely. She bids good-bye to her pride and contempt, as she comes out of her place of hiding and decides to requite his love, being of a far simpler nature than Benedick.

Dramatic Importance

Like the previous scene of which this is a counterpart it complicates the comic sub-plot (Benedick-Beatrice) and advances it still further. It presents a contrast to the previous scene in many ways : (1) the details are sufficiently varied to avoid monotony, as the victim of the conspiracy is a woman, *e. g.*, while the former stresses the sufferings of Beatrice, the present emphasises the pride in contempt and the sarcastic wit of Beatrice against the merits of Benedick ; (2) it is shorter, is in verse rather than in prose and is pitched on a higher key, indicating, as it does, a higher level of feeling ; and (3) it is more in consonance with the general character of Beatrice who is of a far simpler nature than Benedick, is less self conscious than Benedick and, therefore, more appropriately makes a complete arrival of her feelings.

NOTES

1. **Run thee**—you run.

3 **Proposing**—conversing. (from French *Propos*—talk, speech).

4. **Whisper her ear**—whisper in her ear.

6. **All**—wholly.

7. **Pleached**—interwoven. **The pleached bower**—recess formed by interwoven branches.

8. **Honey-suckles**—belonged to the same plant in Shakespeare's time, the woodbine being the plant and the honey-suckle the flower —(Eliacombe ; *Plant-Lore of Shakespeare*, pp. 95-96.)

9-11. **Like favourites made proud by.....that bred it**—like up-starts, spoiled by overindulgence of the king with whom they become intimate, who become so puffed up with pride that they tend to ride rough-shod even over the king himself.

11. **There will she hide her**—she will conceal herself in the same arbour where Benedick had lately been an attentive listener.

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12. **Office**—duty.

14. **Presently**—immediately.

N. B. This first scene of Act III is in essence a repetition of the preceding scene. This relates to the gulling of a concealed listener by a feigned story of love. But, Shakespeare has very admirably avoided the monotony of repetition by employing verse in place of prose. And, the beauty lies that Beatrice interposes no remarks like those of Benedick.

16. **Trace**—walk ; pace. **Alley**—pathway.

21. **Sick in love with**—dying of love for. **Of this matter**—of such things as this love-sickness.

23. **That only wounds by hearsay**—that wounds by heresay only.

24. **Like a lapwing**—like the female green plover which, when any one approaches its nest, runs along the ground, uttering its peculiar cry (whence its other name 'pee-wit'), and so diverts attention from its eggs or young birds.—(D.)

25. **Conference**—conversation.

27. **Golden oars**—fins ; not that all fins are golden, but used here for the sake of contrast with 'silver stream'. Shakespeare is thinking of roach and porch fishing in clear water. Red and golden are often taken as the same colour in Shakespeare.

26-28. **The Pleasant's angling is to see the fish.....the treacherous bait**—Ursula compares their joint efforts at making Beatrice fall in love to angling for fish. It will be pleasant to watch the fish with its golden fins catching the bait and getting caught by the hook. Compare J.C. Smith's remarks on the similes employed by Shakespeare : "These similes are the steeped in sunshine and eke out the scanty descriptions to which Shakespeare was limited by the conditions of his art."

30. **Is couched**—lays herself down. **Woodbine**—it means 'honey-suckle', the great convolvulus or bindweed, so called from its twining about other plants. (Beatrice is to lie down in the woodbine retreat for the purpose of concealment.) **Coverture**—shelter.

34. **Disdainful**—spiteful.

35. **Coy**—bashful.

36. **Haggards**—wild, untrained hawks of the rock.

42. **Wish**—bid.

45. **As full as fortunate**—as deserving of complete happiness in the marriage state, as Beatrice herself.

50. **Of prouder stuff**—made of an unique combination of pride and contempt.

52. **Misprising**—despising ; undervaluing.

54. **Weak**—worthless.

55. **Project**—an idea ; a chalking out : a forming in the mind.

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56. **Self-endeared**—self-loving ; absorbed in love of self.—(Rolfe).

49-56. **But nature never fram'd a woman's heart ....is so self-endeared**—Beatrice is one of the freaks of nature, the like of which is rarely found combining, as she does, the pride of her wit and sarcastic tongue.

58. **She knew his love**—she knew of his love.

60. **Rarely**—*i.e.*, finely.

61. **Spell him backward**—make out all his good qualities to be defects : "So turns she every man the wrong side out." (The witches used to make good prayers evil by reciting them backwards).

62. **Should be**—ought to be.

63. **Black**—of dark complexion. **An antick**—a buffoon ; not only did nature intend in him to draw a buffoon, but even in doing that make a mess of it.

64. **Made a foul blot**—made a mess ; bungled or mismanaged.

65. **Low**—short. **An agate very vildly cut**—one of the figures in a gate stones very badly cut.

N. B. Cut stones were worn in the Elizabethan age. They were cut or engraved with images in miniature. Here Beatrice is comparing a short man to such a figure for his size and moreover to a figure badly engraved.

66. **A vane blown with all winds**—ever on the move, but also, perhaps, with a reference to the constant creaking of the weather-cock as it is blown about from one point of the compass to another. —(D.) **Vane**—weather-cock.

67. **A block moved with none**—a block of wood insensible to feeling.

70. **Simpleness**—simplicity ; used in the sense of folly or stupidity. **Purchaseth**—deservedly obtains. There is no contrast here between 'truth and virtue' on the one hand, and 'simpleness and merit' on the other ; the two latter terms are almost equivalent to 'plain honest merit'.—(D.) Hero's dialogue (lines 59 to 70) shows that Shakespeare had a very close study of women.

68-70. **So turns she every man.....and merit purchaseth**—it would be best not to tell Beatrice about the depth of Benedick's love for her, as her nature is too proud, disdainful, and besides, she would turn even good qualities to appear as if they were bad. Thus, if a man is handsome, she would say that he is fit to masquerade as a woman. If he is of dark complexion, she would make it out that nature made a foul blot while painting a buffoon. In this way Beatrice is so flippant and venomous in her nature that she would find something to ridicule in everything. It is her nature to misconstrue a man and abuse him. Her nature is so curst that honesty and nobility can never be appreciated by her.

71. **Carping**—malicious criticism.

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72. **No, not to be so.....all fashions**—no, nor to be so singular and free from all conventions. **From all fashions**—contrary to.

76. **Press me to death**—do me to death by the heavy weight of raillery. "The allusion is to an ancient punishment of our law, called *peine forte et dure*, which was formerly inflicted on those persons, who, being indicted, refused to plead. In consequence of their silence, they were pressed to death by a heavy weight laid upon their stomach."—(Mason).

80-81. **It were a better death.....die with tickling**—if Hero told Beatrice about Benedick's love, Beatrice would silence her by her mockery. So Hero says it would be better if Benedick is consumed by his sighs of secret love. Hero thinks that it is better that Benedick dies of secret love than that he dies of Beatrice's scorn, disdain and mockery. **Better death, than**—Grant White adopts the reading of the second folio : "It were a *bitter* death to die of mocks" etc., thinking that Hero is referring to her own death. But Hero is here considering the fate of Benedick. So Theobald's reading *better*, is to be preferred. Benedick will be exposed to the mockery of Beatrice, if Hero told her about his great love for her.

84. **Honest slanders**—slanders devised and uttered with a good motive. J. C. Smith observes, "There is some irony here, so Hero herself is to be the victim of slanders by no means honest.

86. **How much an ill word may empoison liking**—Hero, in reply to Ursula's request to tell Beatrice of Benedick's great love for her, says that she refuses to do this. She would rather advise Benedick to fight against his passion or be consumed by it as she (Hero) is sure that Beatrice will invent some slanders thereby killing Benedick's love for her (*i.e.*, Beatrice). **Empoison liking**—affect the popularity of a person.

89. **Swift**—ready.

90. **Priz'd**—honourably reputed to have ; esteemed.

92. **Of Italy**—throughout Italy.

95. **My fancy**—my idea on the subject.

96. **Argument**—conversation.

99. **His excellence**—he deserved it even long before he had it.

101. **Why, every day tomorrow**—why, from tomorrow, I shall be married (*i.e.*, a married woman) every day. It is an old expression though the form was not unusual in Shakespeare's time. It simply means that "I shall be married when tomorrow is over." Ursula's question in this regard was rather surprising as the date of Hero's marriage was announced a week before, and it was not possible that Hero's maid-servant herself did not know that.

103. **To furnish me**—to deck me in.

104. **Limed**—caught as with bird-lime ; caught like a bird.

106. **By haps**—by chance.

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106-07. **If it prove so then.....with traps**—love overcomes people by destiny or accident, which plays a great part in life. While some persons are victimised by the darts of Cupid, the god of Love, others are caught in the traps laid for them. Beatrice now believes that she is the object of Benedick's affections and it is her pride that stands in the way of revealing her passions for him. Beatrice is at last caught in this trap.

108. **What fire is in my ears ? etc.**—Beatrice is merely expressing her indignation at the character that has been given to her by Hero, *viz.*, proud, disdainful and irresponsive to nobility or integrity. When the conspirators (Hero and Ursula) depart, Beatrice comes out of her hiding-place a complete convert. She has swallowed "The false sweet bait", she sees herself as others see her for the first time on her life and bids good-bye to her pride and contempt. **Fire**—burning words.

111. **No glory lives behind etc.**—'no good repute is to be won by those who are contemptuous and scornful of others.'—(D.) Beatrice thus bids farewell to her pride, raillery and contempt.

113. **Taming my wild heart.....hand**—"This image is taken from falconry, She had been charged with being as wild as haggards of the rock : she, therefore, says that *wild* as her *heart* is, she will *tame* it to the *hand*."—(Johnson) : hawks being trained to sit on the hand, or rather, on the wrist of the hawker.—(D.) Her heart may be wild but she will soon be tamed to the loving hand of Benedick.

115. **Bind**—unite.

117. **Reportingly**—more firmly than ordinary hearsay is to be believed.

Act III : Scene II

Summary

This scene is laid in a room in Leonato's house where the prince of Arragon (Don Pedro) proposes to stay on in Messina till Claudio's marriage and than go to Arragon. At this Claudio proposes to accompany him but the prince turns down the offer saying that would mean depriving him of the new gloss of his marriage. He would rather have Benedick who is all mirth, and what his heart thinks his tongue speaks.

At this Benedick is constrained to confess that he is 'not as he has been' and that a change has come over him. Leonato thinks he looks sadder while Claudio surmises he is in love. Don Pedro scouts the idea. Benedick says he is having the toothache. Claudio, however, persists in his opinion. He (Benedick) has shown unmistakeable signs of melancholy : he is clean-shaven, paints his face and attends meticulously to the niceties of the toilet. All these are marks of a lover. They all add that they know of a person who loves Benedick so much that she can now be said to be dying for him. At this stage Benedick who is the victim of this good-humoured raillery, walks away to talk to Leonato with whom he says he has a few words to

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speak. The prince and his friends conclude that Benedick has prince Leonato aside to speak to him about Beatrice.

At this stage when Claudio and Pedro are left alone, the scoundrel, Don John, comes forward with his infamous scheme to poison their minds regarding the chastity of Hero, who is represented as carrying on a secret love-affair with Borachio. He offers to show them proof of this that very night when they could see her chamber-window entered by her paramour. The merry plotters fall an easy prey to the snare of Don John, as Benedick fell into theirs. If this should prove true, they determine to repudiate Hero before the congregation on the wedding-day and disgrace Hero.

Dramatic Importance

This scene unites the comic sub-plot with its counterpart and brings into vital relation with the main plot (the story of Claudio and Hero) into a varied frame-work. It reveals the character of Claudio. The dramatic principle of contrast is fully utilised by tagging a comic scene with its counterpart, which is a gloomy one. The audience is left in the tenter-hooks of suspense as to the possible fate of the innocent lady Hero.

NOTES

1. **Consummate**—celebrated ; consummated.

2. **Go I toward Arragon**—the dialogue between Don Pedro and Claudio is rather non-serious. The point is that the prince is going to tease Benedick by asking to accompany him, but Benedick is sure to refuse, he now being love-sick.

3. **Bring**—accompany ; conduct.

3-5. **Vouchasafe me**—allow me.

5-6. **New gloss**—first freshness. *Cf. Macbeth.* I, vii, 34, "Which would be worn in their newest gloss."

7-8. **I will only be bold with Benedick for his company**—I will be bold with Benedick only. I will make a demand upon him only for his company ; not only for his company in the sense of 'his company and nothing more', but his company and no one else's—(D.)

9-10. **He hath twice or thrice cut Cupid's bow-string**—he has on several occasions shown that he laughs at love and love's attacks. There is perhaps a reference here to events that have happened before the play opens, calculated to produce the illusion of long familiarity with the characters (Benedick and Beatrice). The prince says : "The former woman-hater is converted in a woman-worshipper. He (Benedick) has resisted the attacks of love on several occasions and his heart as sound as bell, as he speaks out his thoughts without reserve." **Cut Cupid's bow string**.....*i.e.*, put him out of action.

10. **The little hangman**—"Cupid is called so in jest as the **executioner of human hearts.**"

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11. **As should as a bell**—a proverbial phrase. The slightest crack in a bell would make it useless.

12. **Clapper**—the tongue of the ball.

12-13. **What his heart thinks, his tongue speaks**—the heart-whole Benedick speaks out all that he thinks. According to Steevens, a covert allusion to the proverb—

"As the fool thinketh,
So the bell clinketh."

18. **To be**—so that it should be.

20. **The tooth ache**—the lover's diseases, which they (Pedro and (his friends) know to be only a pretext, when they ask Benedick why he is rather melancholy and out of spirits.

17. **Truant**—deserter.

21. **Draw it**—extract the tooth.

22. **Hang it**—curse it.

23. **You must hang etc.**—an allusion to hanging, drawing, and quartering, the punishment of criminals condemned for treason.

Comments. Traitors were drawn to the place of execution then hanged, then drawn or disembowelled and then quartered (cut into four parts). Lord Ellenborough used to give the orders to condemned persons thus : "You are drawn or hurdled, to the place of execution, where you are to be hanged, but not till you are dead, for, while still living, your body is to be taken down, your bowels torn out and burnt before your face ; your head is then cut off and your body divided into four quarters."—(Gentlemen's Magazines).

25. **Where is**—where there is ; which is caused by. **A worm**—at the root of the tooth was formerly supposed to be the cause of headache, arising out of evil humours of the body, *viz.*, blood, phlegm, choler and melancholy.

26. **Every one can master a grief**—originally it was 'cannot', and Pope is said to have altered 'cannot' to 'can'—the meaning being that "it is easy for those who have pain to show the one who has now to bear it."

Fancy—love.

30. **Unless it be a fancy etc.**—unless it be that he has a special liking for strange disease. Notice the play (pun) on the double meaning of the world fancy in the sense of, (1) love, and (2) liking.

Comment. Evidently Shakespeare is here ridiculing the craze for variety in dress among his contemporaries. This was the stock theme of satire in the dramatic literature of the time. *Cf.* What Portia in *Merchant of Venice* (I. ii. 79) says of the Englishmen of the time : "I think he bought his doublet in Italy, his round horse in France, his bonnet in Germany." Also see Dekker in *The Seven Deadly Sins* (1606) : "For an Englishman's suit is like a traitor's body that has been hanged, drawn and quartered, and is set up in

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several places ; his codpiece in Denmark ; the collar of his doublet and the belly in France ; the wing and narrow sleeve in Italy ; the short waist hangs over a Dutch butcher's stall in Utrich ; his huge slops speak Spanish ; Polonia gives him the boots ; the block for his head alters faster than the felt-maker can fit him, and thereupon we are called scorn 'blockheads'. Also Lodge's *Rosalynde* (1596) : "Who is this with the Spanish hat, the Italian ruffle ; the French doublet, the Muffe's clock, the Toledo rapier, the German hose, the English stocking and the Flemish shoe."

When Benedick appears in a strange dress, Claudio suggests that possibly he is in love. Don Pedro sees in Benedick no signs of love, unless it be in his inclination to strange types of dress, which is perhaps the only symbol of love he can observe in Benedick.

33. **Slops**—large, loose, baggy breeches or trousers. (Mark the contrast between the thick heavy German and the sparse, slender Spaniard).

33-34. **No doublet**—"or in other words, all cloak."

35. **He is no fool for fancy**—he does not appear to be under the influence of love (fancy), unless it be his fancy (liking) for strange dress or disguised.

38. **Old signs**—a well-known sign of love is to be noticed in the brushing of one's hat early in the morning.

39. **Bode**—indicate.

42. **Old ornament of his cheek**—his whiskers and beard.

42-43. **The Old ornament of.....tennis-balls**—when Don Pedro asks whether anybody has seen Benedick at the barber's, Claudio replies that the Barber's man was found with him and his beard (which was like an ornament for his cheeks) has now been shaved off and the hair, thus released, already been used to stuff tennis-ball.

N. B. In Shakespeare's time tennis-balls were used to be stuffed with hair.

44. **By the loss**—to the extent of the loss.

46. **Civet**—perfume obtained from a small bag at the tail of a civet-cat. This perfume undiluted is offensive ; but, mixed with other substances, it was much in vogue in former times.

46-47. **Smell him out by that**—detect his condition by the perfume he has used.

48. **Sweet**—a play on scented.

49. **The greatest not of it is his melancholy**—the true lover revealed his state by acute melancholy and everything about him demonstrating a careless desolation. **Note**—mark.

50. **And when was he wont to wash his face ?**—in those days Englishmen were by no means so fond of washing their faces as they are now. **Wash**—to wash with perfume or apply cosmetics.

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51. **Paint himself**—use rouge etc. to improve his complexion, as was customary with men and women in those days.

53. **Nay, but his jesting spirit**—thinks too what has become of his former lover of jesting, how completely it has disappeared.

54. **Lute string**—love-songs were usually sung to the music of the lute. **Stops**—the divisions on the finger-board of lute, indicating just where the finger is to be pressed in order to produce such notes.

55. **Tells a heavy tale**—is strong evidence against him, *i. e.*, of his being in love.

57. **Nay, but I know who loves him**—yes, he is clearly in love, and not only that but I know who is the person with whom he is in love.

60. **Ill conditions**—bad qualities. **In despite of all**—despite the fact he is not worthy of being in love.

61. **Dies for him**—dies of love for him.

62. **She shall be buried.....upwards**—she shall be buried in her lover's arms (with her face upward).

63. **Yet is this no charm for the tooth-ache**—Benedick finds himself in a difficulty in defending himself against the charge of having fallen in love. So he seeks to divert the drift to conversation away from the topic. So he says that all of this loose talk about his having fallen in love will not cure of him toothache from which he is already suffering. He then quietly draws Leonato aside to whisper to him a charm for the toothache, which the prince and Claudio must not hear.

64-65. **Eight or nine wise words**—Chettle gives such a charm for the toothache : "A AB Illa hvrs Gibbella." Another charm for the toothache is referred to in Rolfe (from Scott's *Discoveries of Witchcraft*) : "O horse-combs and sickles that have so many teeth, come, heale me of my toothache.

65. **Hobby-horses**—laughing jackasses ; buffoons. The hobby-horse was one of the figures in the morries-dances. The term was contemptuously applied to foolish men and loose women.

67. **Break with**—open or broach the matter in conversation with.

68. **Hero and Margaret**—*N. B.* It was Ursula, not Margaret, who played the part. The substitution is probably no more than a slip, and has no relevant meaning.

69. **And then**—the result of which will be. **The two bears**—refers to Benedick and Beatrice who have hitherto been as fierce to each other as two bears.

72. **Good den**—a contraction of "Good-even"—a form of salutation used as noon was past.

81. **I know not that**—I am by no means sure of that.

82. **Discover**—reveal.

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84. **Aim better at me**—attempt a better estimate of me ; form a true judgment of me and my disposition than you have hitherto done.

84-85. **For my brother**—as regards my brother.

85. **Holds you well**—loves you, regards you with favour.

86. **Holp**—helped.

89-90. **Circumstances shortened**—to cut the matter short ; unnecessary details omitted.

90. **For she has been.....of**—for she has been talked of more than enough, *i.e.*, has given cause for plenty of scandal. **A talking of**—talked about in a depreciatory way.

91. **Disloyal**—false to her betrothed husband.

96. **To paint out**—fully to describe ; depicted. The word 'out' intensifies the meaning.

98. **Fit her to it**—show that she corresponds to it. **Warrant**—proof.

100. **Then**—after seeing that.

103. **May**—can.

105-06 **If you dare not trust.....you know**—if you are not then convinced by such ocular proof, do not mention what you know.

106. **Follow me**—*i.e.*, my guidance in this matter.

109. **Any thing**—any good reason.

115. **Bear it coldly**—keep cool about it.

117. **O day untowardly turned**—O the day which began happily, but it now having such and untoward ending. **Untowardly**—adversely.

118. **O mischief strangely thwarting**—O the mischief which is crossing my desires so unexpectedly !

119-20. **So will you say when you have seen the sequel**—so will you say if things turn out as I know that they will.

Comment. Notice that the exclamations made by each of the three characters furnish us with the real key to their intrinsic nature Don Pedro is no doubt a kindly and sympathetic friend, but he acts blindly in being easily deceived by the machinations of Don John and the scoundrel Borachio. Claudio is a simple and credulous believer in mischief. He is unreflective and easily gullible. He always rushes headlong into the wrong conclusion. He allows himself to be duped by the same villain twice. Don John is only a lesser Iago whose villainy is in his 'blood' whose innate malice renders the joy of others a pain and the pain of others a joy.

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Act III : Scene III

Summary

The outcome of the merry plot of the prince (Don Pedro) is that both Beatrice and Benedick are now love-sick, and a kind of seriousness has infected all their ways and speech. This seriousness of the two wity characters prepares us for the deep shadow which will soon give a tragic colouring to the main action arising out of the second villainous scheme of Don John and the scoundrel Borachio. In this scene Shakespeare consequently introduces a new comic element in the persons of Dogberry, Verges and the Watchmen to relieve the tragic tension.

The scene opens with the constable Dogberry and Verges, the headboroughs of Messina, giving instructions to the night-watchmen on duty based on a policy of least resistance. This is another instance of 'much ado about nothing', for it virtually amounts to an elaborate set of instructions to leave everything undone that the subordinate police staff are appointed to do, except. of course, for Seacole and Oatcake who, alone among the other of the night-watch, do not act up entirely to the spirit of this charge. It is significant that the constable Dogberry gives one of the watch-men the lantern as he thinks him to be the most *senseless* and fit person for acting as the constable of the watch.

The chief work of the watch will be to 'comprehend' (a malapropism for 'apprehend') all 'vagrom' (vagrant, *i. e.*, question-able) characters likely to move about the streets at night. They are to call upon any man to stand in the prince's name. If he does not obey, he should not interfere, for no subject of the prince will dare disobey. They should call at the ale-houses and get those, who are drunk, to bed. Thieves should not be meddled with. They should be particularly vigilant and to watch about the door of the house of Leonato where a marriage is to be celebrated on the following day.

When the watchmen are left along to carry out in actual practice the above instructions, they notice Borachio and Conrade, the followers of Don John, steal out into the srteet. The drunken Borachio makes a clean breast of all that he has done by the side of Hero's chamber-window. Here he has wooed Margaret in the name of Hero in the presence of the prince and Claudio, who have thus been led to think that it was Hero that spoke from the chamber window. Borachio further reveals that Claudio swore he would disgrace Hero before the congregation next morning at the church by refusing to marry her.

The foolish watchmen overhear the above confession and though they do not quite understand the purport of the talk, they do know enough to take immediate action by-arresting Borachio and Conrade.

Dramatic Importance

Shakespeare seems to have felt that a new seriousness has

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developed in the relations of Benedick and Beatrice, both of whom have tended to be silent, dreaming and solitary instead of flashing out in wit and humour. This seriousness is a dramatic device to prepare us for the deep shadow of Don John's nefarious plot designed to blacken the honour of Hero. In order to lessen the tragic tension and save the comedy from becoming too serious, Shakespeare introduced a new element of comedy by bringing in the Dogberry-Verges episode, which also illustrates the monstrous stupidity and self-conceit of English watchmen of his time essential for the plot of the play. Had the constables and the watchmen been a little more intelligent, they would have prevented the intended mischief at the church next morning.

NOTES

S. D. **Enter Dogberry and Verges with the Watch**—a more appropriate stage direction would be "enter Dogberry, Verges, Seacoal, Oatcake and Watch. This is necessary because Seacoal was appointed *constable of the watch* for the night. **Dogberry and Verges**—"the first of these worthies has his name from the *dogberry, i. e.*, dogwood, a common shrub growing in the hedges of the countryside in England. Verges is only the provincial corruption for verjuice."—(Steevens).

1. **Good men and true**—dutiful and honest. These are the technical qualifications of public servants, such as, constable, etc.

2-3. **Yea, for else it were.....body and soul**—if they do not prove themselves to be dutiful and honest, it would indeed be a disgrace—it would be a shame if they escaped perdition in Hell.

3. **Salvation**—a blunder (malapropism) for damnation. "If they are not good men and ture, it would be a shame if they escaped damnation."

5. **Allegiance**—loyalty to the prince. (Here Dogberry means the opposite of this).

6. **The prince's watch**—"these relics of the past were still to be seen in some parts of England thirty years ago, with their bell and staff, though they no longer wielded the bill."—(D.) In Shakespeare's time there was no regular police force. Each parish appointed a constable. When a watch was needed sober citizens were called upon to do this duty, clashes between the watch and the gallants were common.

7. **Give them their charge**—directions as to their duty as watchmen for the night.

8. **Desartless**—a 'malapropism' for deserving.

13. **Good name**—probably a 'good reputation' as in Act III, Sc. i, line 98, but Dogberry may be referring literally to his name 'well-favoured—good-looking.' **To be a well-favoured**—to be handsome is the gift of Nature ; Fortune brings attainments such as learning. (Dogberry makes use of these words in a wrong way ; the questions of beauty and attainments are better discussed by Celia and Rosalind in *As You Like It*).

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Comment. Dogberry's 'malapropism' are extremely diverting. He swells with the consciousness of superior knowledge arising out of his egotism.

20. **No need**—more need. **Vanity**—a blunder for 'capacity' or ability.

21. **Senseless**—a blunder for 'sensible'.

N. B. Every night a watchman was appointed to be the *constable of the watch* who was also to be the bearer of the *lanthorn* the insignia of his office.

22. **Lanthorn**—lantern ; part of the equipment of a watchman in days when the streets were so dimly lighted, if lighted at all—(D.)

23. **Comprehend**—a blunder for 'apprehend.' **Vagrom**—a blunder for 'vagrant.'

31. **True**—honest. **Meddle**—interfere with.

33. **Tolerable**—a blunder for 'intolerable.'

35. **We will rather sleep**—this joke about the watchmen sleeping seems to have a favourite with Elizabethan dramatists. Editors usually assign this speech to Watch No. 2, who seems to be an intelligent one, but there is still the vagueness. Therefore the readers and the producers are at liberty to assign it to whomsoever they like.

35-36. **What belongs to a watch**—what is befitting a watch.

37. **Ancient**—of long standing.

38. **I cannot see how sleeping should offend**—Dogberry would not mind if the watchmen go to sleep provided their bills (pikes) are not stolen. How can they be dutiful and honest public servants if they are allowed to sleep ? This propensity for *sleeping* while discharging public duties is a standing joke with Elizabethan writers.

Comment. Note that Dogberry and Verges are introduced into the story with a double purpose. The groundlings wanted some clowning in the comedies. While introducing this type of clowning Shakespeare had to ponder to the tastes of his audience. His constructive genius appears in the way he makes the Dogberry-Verges episode a virtue of necessity, *i.e.*, he makes these two characters unconscious agents who avert the tragedy.

39. **Bills**—the halberds or pikes which in Shakespeare's day were carried by watchmen. Dr. Johnson says that they were still in use at Lichfield in his day.

44-45. **If they make you not.....you took them for**—if they do not answer you more civilly and promise to go to their house, you may say that you made a mistake in trying to apprehend them—"an excuse which according to Halliwell, was usually made by constables when they had searched innocent person."—(D.)

49-50. **The less you meddle or make.....honesty**—"The less you have to do with such men, the better the chance of your continuing honest men, or of being reputed such."—(D.)

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53. **By your office, you may**—*i.e.*, you would be perfectly justified as watchmen in laying hands on him, but you will find it more prudent etc.

53-54. **But I think they.....defiled**—but I am positive that people who indulge in sinful acts, must be scandalised. "A popular proverb found in *Ecclesiasticus*, XIII, i ; "He that toucheth itch shall be defiled therewith."—(Rolfe).

55-56. **To let him show himself.....your company**—to let him show what he really is by stealing (*i.e.*, going quietly, stealthily) out of your presence. It is a pun that Shakespeare uses here. A similar expression is found in *Henry V*.

60. **Much more**—he means 'much less.'

61-62. **If you hear a child cry.....bid still it**—if the watchmen hear a child at night, they should bid the nurse still it on pain of punishment. If, however, the nurse be asleep, they should let the child wake her up by its cries.

N. B. Part of this scene is intended as a burlesque on *the Statutes of the Streets*, printed by Wolfe (1595), according to which sounds, such as, those produced by the blowing of horn, or any sudden outcry or affray or singing etc., after 9 o'clock at night were prohibited in Shakespeare's time.

65-66. **For the ewe that will not.....bleats**—if the nurse will not be roused from her sleep by the childs cries, such an irresponsible person will never respond if others call (bleating of a calf.)

66. **Baes**—bays. **Will never answer a calf when he bleats**—will never pay any attention to injunctions such as yours.

Comment. Dogberry's reply to the question of the watchman (what shall we do if the nurse be asleep or will not hear us ?) shows that he is one who advocates a policy of non-interference and least resistance. The watchman is to meddle as little as possible with thieves. He is not to offend any man in any way.

69. **Present**—represent.

70. **Stay him**—stop him and question him as to his business at that late hour of the night.

71. **By'r lady**—by the Virgin Mary.

72. **Five shilling to one etc.**—I would bet five shillings to one with any man acquainted with the statues, that he may...etc.

73. **Statues**—it is surprising that Dogberry uses this word correctly.

73-74. **Not without the prince be willng**—of course, not without the consent of the prince.

77. **Ha, ah, ah**—this is not mere merriment. It is an expression of a superior knowledge that Dogberry assumes to have to Verge's knowledge. It is rather an attempt of criticism.

78-79. **Keep your fellows' counsels etc.**—"This part of the oath of a grand juryman and one of that many proofs of Shakes-

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peare's having been conversant, at some period of his life, with legal proceedings and courts of justice."—Likewise, it was a custom in England to give a charge to constables on behalf of the Head Constable. Malone describes this oath, "The King's counsel, your fellows and your own, you shall observe and keep secret."

82. **Upon the church-bench**—a bench outside or more frequently in the porches of churches for visitors to the spot, or for worshippers waiting for the opening of the church to rest themselves upon. These benches are still to be seen in village churches.—(D.)

85. **Coil**—bustle : trouble ; disturbance.

86. **Vigitant**—*i.e.*, vigilant.

91. **Mass**—by the Mass (a petty oath). **And my elbow itched**—that is why my elbow itched. It is an indication that some wickedness is to happen.

92. **Scab**—a low fellow. "The incrustation formed over sores by dried matter : applied to persons as a term of extreme contempt and disgust. (Used here with double meaning). *Cf. Coriolanus*, I. i. 169 :

> "What is the matter, you dissentious rogues,
> That rubbing the poor itch of your opinions,
> Make yourselves scabs ?"

91-92 **Mass, and my elbow.....follow**—Borachio says in reply to Conrade coming from the opposite side of the road that he knew that he would come across a rascal like Conrade, for his elbow itched. **Elbow itched**—a superstition in the age of Elizabeth. If one's elbow itched, one would presently meet some undesirable person.

93. **I will owe thee an answer for that**—I will repay your rudeness in the same coin sooner or later.

95. **Stand thee close**—in concealment. **Pent-house**—"a porch or shed with a sloping roof, common in the domestic architecture of the time"—(Rolfe) ; it is still to be seen especially in villages.

96. **It drizzles rain**—it rains slightly (an indefinite use of it'.) **True drunkard**—"who divulges everything when in his cups, *i.e.*, under the influence of liquor." An intoxicated man cannot keep silent. He must divulge all the secrets that he knows.

Comment. The very name of Borachio means a drunkard and like a true drunkard he makes a full confession of his crime to Conrade. He is ready to admit his villainly.

101-02. **Should be so dear**—should cost so much ; have to be paid so highly. **Any villainy should be so dear etc.**—Note that, Borachio in line 105, is repeating Conrade's very words with the substitution of *rich* for *dear* ; and though Conrade's remark refers to Borachio, and Borachio's to Don John, it seems scarcely necessary to change *villainy* into *villain* which some editors do. It should, however, be noticed that in the next line 'rich villains' are spoken of.—(D.)

108. **Unconfirmed**—inexperienced.

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110. **Nothing to a man**—of no real importance to man.

114. **I may as well say.....fool**—if you say fashion is the fashion, I may as well say that the fool is the fool and that you are.

115. **Deformed thief**—misshapen (but also probably with the sense of disfiguring) rascal.

117. **This seven years**—for ever so long. **Goes up and down**—*i.e.*, instead of being locked up, as he ought to be, in jail.

116-18. **I know that Deformed,.....his name**—when the watch has overheard the conversation about some shady affair by the two suspect (Borachio and Conrade), says aside to his comrade that he can recognise the fellow who was talking about 'Deformed', being unable to understand what Borachio means by saying that 'fashion' was a deformed thief. The watch says that he has known this gentleman-thief during the last seven years, in spite of his fashionable dress, going about the world like a free man although the jail ought to have been the proper place for him ('Deformed'.) This speech is typical of the stupidity of the watch, which Shakespeare is ridiculing here.

120. **Vane**—the creaking sound made by the weather-cock.

121. **A deformed thief**—a disfigured robber of man's natural appearance.

122. **Hot bloods**—hot-blooded, young and fashionable rakes.

124. **Pharaoh's soldiers**—*i.e.*, figures taken from scriptural subjects in the old tapestries or the 'painted cloths' frequently mentioned by Shakespeare. A favourite figure was the persuit of the Israelites by the soldiers of pharaoh, King of Egypt. **Reechy**—dirty from the smoke of the flaring lights used by our ancestors. Bel's priests "alluding to some awkward representation of the story of '*Bel and the Dragon*', as related in the Apocrypha. Representation of Biblical narratives are common in the stained-glass of churches and cathedrals in Europe."—(Steevens).

125. **Like god Bel's priests**—Bel is the heathen god, Beal. Here the reference to some awkward representation of the story of Bel and the Dragon as related in the Apocrypha.

129. **The shaven Hercules**—"Hercules when shaved (of his) beard) to make him look like a woman, while he remained to the service of Omphale, his Lydian mistress. Had the shaved Hercules been meant to represent Samson, (as imagined by Warburton, a critic) he would probably have been equipped with a jawbone (he having slain a thousand men with that weapon) a club."—(Steevens). **Smirched**—soiled : sullied. **Tapestry**—woven fabric wrought with figures.

121-26. **Seest thou not, I say.....what worm-eaten tapestry**—Borachio is here describing to Conrade 'the Deformed thief' (Don John) who was rich and fashionable but really he was a villain. Incidentally he is talking about 'new fashions', which disguise a villain. **Rich villains** [illegible] gentlemen and do a lot of mischief in

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the world. They misguided hot-blooded young men of the age ranging from 14 to 35, who assume the most fantastic appearances as they go about their wicked business, such as those put on by Pharaoh's soldiers, while crossing the Red Sea, representations in stained-glass of the story of '*Bel and the Dragon*' in the church-window and again sometimes like Hercules, shaved to look like a woman, in the service of Omphale, his Lydian mistress.

128-29. **Wears out**—causes them to cast aside as worn out.

130. **Giddy with the fashion**—has got this fashion of which you talk so much, turned your head, made you giddy and incapable of keeping long to one thing ? **Shifted out of**—as though out of a garment.

137. **Possessed**—told.

138. **Amiable encounter**—loving meeting.

142. **Possessed**—persuaded.

145. **As he was appointed**—as it had been appointed he should do ; according to the arrangement for the marriage in the church.

146. **Temple**—church.

147. **Shame her etc.**—by the narration of that which he saw at the clandestine meeting at Hero's chamber-window and the love-intrigue she carried on with me.

150. **Right master**—right honourable master.

151. **Recovered**—blunder for 'discovered'. **Lechery**—a blunder for 'treachery'.

154. **A' wears lock**—he wears a love-lock ; "an allusion to the custom of wearing a long lock of hair, worn under the left ear." These love-locks were very much in vogue in the reign of Charles I.

159. **Obey you**—entreat you.

161-62. **We are liked to prove .....bills**—here is a cluster of conceits—commodity was formerly, as now, the usual term for an article of merchandise. *To take up*, besides its common meaning (to apprehend)—was the phrase for obtaining goods on credit. "If a man is thorough with them in honest *taking up* (says Falstaff) then they must stand upon security. *Bill* was the term both for a single bond, and a halberd."—(Malone.)

163. **A commodity in question**—"A commodity subject to judicial trial or examination."—(Steevens). Here it is another pun. One meaning is 'doubtful bargain', and another is 'likely to be questioned in law.'

Act I : Scene IV

Summary

This short scene is laid in Hero's apartment. The time is early morning on her wedding-day. Hero asks her attendant, Margaret, to ask Beatrice to come into her room. She then discusses with Margaret, the best dress she should wear on her wedding-day,

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Margaret, who is a light-hearted creature, brimming over with witty remarks, is particularly loquacious and flippant this morning in their exchange of replies. Hero is a girl with a silent, sensitive nature She is thoughtful but never loquacious. This particular morning she feels the presentment of coming evil. She openly confesses to her maid that her heart is exceedingly heavy. At this Margaret pops out with a witty, though vulgar, remark : "'T will be heavier soon by the weight of a man", which Hero does not relish.

By this time Beatrice comes. Her voice is so odd that Hero wonders why she speaks in the "sick tune" and looks exceedingly ill. Margaret in her light-hearted manner and usual bantering style asks her to get some distilled Carduus Benedictus (a herb which is a panacea for any disease under the sun), with a pun, of course, on the name 'Benedick', and lay it to her heart. Margaret also adds that a similar change like hers has also come over the professed marriage-hater, Benedick.

Ursula now enters to fetch her (Hero) to the church. Hero withdraws to the dressing-room in order to get ready for the ceremony.

Dramatic Importance

Although this short scene does not serve to advance the action in any manner, it brings out the innocence and feminine nature of Hero, and its dramatic value consists in giving the audience a brief glimpse of the preparations for the marriage of Hero which is to end in a deplorable fiasco, shattering all her dreams. It reveals the spirit of the two heroines of the main and sub-plots on the eve of a crisis, which is presented with a great artistic skill in Shakespeare's usual manner, *viz.*, 'coming evils cast their shadows before'. It also presents a contrasted picture of Beatrice in love, which is but a counterpart of a previous scene in which Benedick has already been seen in almost the same condition.

NOTES

6. **Rabato**—an ornament for the neck, a collar-band or kind of ruff so called from the verb *rabattre*, to put back. It used to be supported by wires known as rabato wires.

8. **By my troth's not so good**—by my faith, it is not so good. **Warrant**—am sure.

12. **Tire**—attire ; head-dress (more suitable in an inner room). **Within**—in an ante-room.

12-13. **If the hair were a thought browner**—if the hair in the head-dress were only a shade browner, so as to match Hero's better ; 'a reference to the false hair in vogue then, as now, and so frequently satirized.' **A thought**—a little ; a shade.

16. **That exceeds, they say**—that is passing fashionable.

17. **A night gown**—a loose gown for undress; what we now call a night-gown would have then been known as a dressing-gown. (D.)

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Cf. Macbeth, V. i, ".....I have seen her rise from her bed, throw her night-gown upon her."

17-18. **In respect of**—in comparison with.

N. B. We can form some idea of the kind of dress that highly-placed ladies of the aristocratic families wore in the age of Queen Elizabeth on ceremonial occasions. The Queen used to indulge in the fashionable practice of constant change of false hair. Hero's dressing-gown is made up of cloth thickly inter-tissued with gold threads. Compared to the gown of the Duchess of Milan. Hero's gown outshines the former in finery, texture and conformity to the latest fashion.

18. **Cloth o' Gold**—cloth thickly interwoven with gold threads, the Indian *Kinkale*. **Cuts**—the shaped edges of the skirt and long sleeves. These edges were so shaped as to resemble letters of the alphabet, leaves of plants, flowers etc. **Laced**—braided.

18-19. **Set with pearls**—with its sleeves embroided with small pearls (seed pearls) after the fashion of the dress worn by Queen Elizabeth. It was Common to sew garments of state with small pearls in those days.

19. **Down sleeves, side sleeves**—"The dress was made after a fashion which is illustrated in many old portraits. Beside a sleeve which fitted more or less closely to the arm and extended to the wrist, there was another for ornament, which hung from the shoulder wide and open in which case *down sleeves* should mean the inner close sleeves, *side sleeves*, the outer loose ones. *Side* was used for *long* when applied to the garment in the north of England and in Scotland".—(Grant White). This expression has caused much trouble to commentators.

19-20. **Skirts round underborne with a bluish tihsel**—skirts trimmed all round with etc.

20. **Quaint**—elegant ; almost 'smart'.

22. **God give me joy to wear it**—Hero appears to have been anticipating some evil, hence this prayer.

24. **By the weight of a man**—by having a husband.

27-28. **Honourable without marriage**—*i.e.*, even without marriage, the word *honourable* belonging to him as a title. 'Honourable in a beggar' is probably a reference to *Hebrews*, XII. iv: "Marriage is honourable to all" etc.—"a passage which forms part of the marriage service of the English chruch."—(D.)

28-29. **I think you would have me say,.....husband**—"I feel you have justly taken exception to my jest, which may appear rather vulgar to you. So I am ready to make amends for the sake of decency and propriety by saying 'by the weight of a husband' instead of 'the weight of a man,' for unless bad thinking wrest honest speaking (*i.e.*, unless immodest thoughts put a bad construction upon honest words), you cannot, at all events, find anything objectionable in my amended version, viz. 'The heavier for a husband.'"—(D.)

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N. B. This is how Margaret makes amends when Hero takes exception to her rather indecent and vulgar jest, *viz.*, "It will be heavier soon by the weight of a man."

31-32. **The right husband, and the right wife**—*i.e.*, not a husband with some one else's wife. **Light**—by the light pressure of a man and not by heavy weight of a husband.

N. B. The play on the word 'light' in the two senses of 'not heavy' and of 'whore or wanto', as is frequent in Shakespeare.

33. **Ask my lady Beatrice else**—if you do not believe what I say, you may ask Lady Beatrice.

34. **Cox**—cousin.

36. **The sick tune**—like the tune of a sick person meaning that Beatrice has not her former gaiety. Love has worked this change in her.

37. **Am out of all other tune**—I cannot speak in any other tund or tone of voice, as I am out of sorts. **Methinks**—it seems to me.

38. **'Light o' love'**—a kind of dance so called. **Clap us into 'Light o' love'**—let us quickly strike into the tune of the dance called 'Light o' love', which is frequently mentioned by the old dramatists and of which Sir J. Hawkins discovered the music in an old MS. 'To clap into' means to strike into or to begin quickly.

38-39. **Without a burden**—a musical refrain and a load, referring to Hero's heaviness of heart. Notice the pun on the word 'burden' meaning—(1) refrain, and (2) heaviness of heart, *i.e.*, sadness.

39. **Do you sing it**—hum the air.

40. **Ye light o' love**—yes, you wanton, (a loose woman). Here again is a double meaning, (1) you can dance to the tune, and (2) you can act as a wanton woman.

42. **Barns**—a quibble on 'barns' (=storehouse for grains), and 'barns' (=children).

53. **Illegitimate construction**—illogical conclusion. What a conclusion from what a premise !

43-44. **Scorn that with my heels**—I kick out at your insinuation.

46. **Ready**—dressed. **Heigh-ho**—an interjection expressive of disappointment ; a sigh.

47. **For a hawk**—do you sing 'heigh-ho' for a.....etc.

N. B. 'Heigh-ho for a husband' is the title of an old ballad. —(Malone).

48. **For the letter**—a reference to the older pronunciation of *ache* or *aiche*. This was a favourite pun, *i.e.*, on the letter 'H' and *ache* (pronounced and spelt as *atche*). *Cf. Wit's Recreation*, 1640—

"Nor hawk, nor hound, nor horse, these letters hhh,
But *ach* itself, 't is Brutus bones attaches."

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49. **Turned Turk**—a proverbial expression for any change of condition for the worse, especially of changing one's religion.

49-50. **There's no more**—we need never again trust the stars.

50. **Sailing by the star**—it is an exclamation meaning if you are not in love, there is nothing certain in this world.

51. **Trow**—wonder (an exclamation).

54-55. **Are an excellent perfume**—of an excellent perfume; excellently scented. It was customary to present scented gloves.

56. **Stuffed**—have a cold in my nose and cannot smell.

57-58. **There's a goodly catching of cold**—that's a pretty way of catching cold.

60. **Professed apprehension**—set up for a wit with a reference to the practising of any profession or calling.

61. **Ever since you left it**—ever since you left off setting up for a wit.

63-64. **It is not seen enough.....cap**—that is, where it may be conspicious : probably with a reference to the custom of knights etc., wearing in their helments etc., gloves and other tokens of their mistress's favour.—(D).

65. **Carduus Benedictus**—"or blessed thistle so worthily named for the singular virtues that it hath. This herb may worthily be colled Benedictus or Omnimorbia, that is, a salve for every sore, not known to physicians of olden times, but lately revealed by the special providence of Almighty God."—(Steevens).

65-66. **Get you some of this distilled.....qualm**—Margaret recommends the herb (Carduus Benedictus) as the best remedy for her sickness, as her husband at the earliest possible moment.

66. **Lay it to your heart**—apply it to your heart, as a plaster, etc.; is applied, and with it a play on the phrase 'to lay a thing to the heart, *i.e.*, to ponder on it.

67. **Prickest her with a thistle**—your words pierce her very sharply (with a pun, of course, on the word 'thistle').

68-69. **Some moral**—some secret meaning.

72-73. **I am not such a fool.....what I can**—"I am not such a fool as to give free play to my thoughts and think just what I should like to think nor do I like to think all that I might think etc. Margaret, in her banter of Hero, is merely stringing together a number of phrases without much meaning."—(D).

74. **Think my heart of thinking**—think till I have worn my heart out with thinking.

76. **Such another**—a scoffer at love like yourself.

76-77. **Become a man**—"has shown himself as capable of being wounded by love as many other men."

77-78. **Yet now in despite of his.....grudging**—"and yet now, in spite of his resolution, to the contrary, he feels on love, and likes

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his food"—(Malone). But it "seems doubtful whether anything more is meant than that Benedick, in spite of his heart being touched with love, does not find himself any the worse for it."—(D.)

79-80. **Look with your eyes as other women do**—are, like other women, liable to love ; direct your eyes towards the same object. *viz.*, a husband.

82. **Not a false gallop**—a natural, not a forced pace.

83. **Withdraw**—*i.e.*, to your dressing-room in order to get ready for the marriage.

85. **Fetch**—escort.

Act III : Scene V

Summary

Early in the morning of the marriage-day the two worthies, Dogberry and Verges, armed with the secret information about the clandestine visit of Borachio at Hero's chamber-window, and his subsequent arrest alongwith that of his comrade by the watch the previous night, wait on Leonato to report to him these disclosures. But they are so tedious and long winded in the telling of their story that Leonato is unable to get any information from them relevant to Hero and Claudio, except that they had arrested a couple of arrant knaves. In his anxiety for making arrangement for the marriage of his daughter, for which he has to hurry to the church, he has no patience with the self-important Dogberry. The self-concious Dogberry cannot come to the point. When Verges attempts to give some relevant information, he is silenced by his superior colleague. However the truth of the arrest of Borachio does leak out, but Leonato is unable to understand how this man is in any way implicated in the conspiracy against Hero and Claudio. So Leonato, in his hurry to get things done quickly on the marriage-day, leaves the case to be 'examined by the Head Canstable and his watch first and, bidding farewell to the simpletons, proceeds to the church where the marriage party is waiting for him.

Dramatic Importance

This scene is admirable for many things vital to the comedy : (1) the fussy haste of Leonato with bridal ceremony on his hands, for which he lets slip a golden opportunity of preventing the mischief set on foot by Don John ; (2) the dramatic irony of the situation *i.e.*, had Leonato personally taken up the examination of the two knaves himself, he would have been able to avert the tragedy in the church; (3) the fussy self-importance of Dogberry and Verges—the two officers of the law—their stupidity and long-windedness contribute not a little to the humour of the comedy. "Only such a pair and only the pair of them could have wasted a whole scene without conveying a hint of their information."

NOTES

1. **What would you with me ?**—what business would you have with me.

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2-3. **Confidence with you.....nearly**—conference that concerns you vitally. Notice the Malapropisms in 'confidence' (for conference) and 'decerns' (for concerns).

6. **That it is sir**—it is indeed an anxious thing that concerns you.

9-10. **Off the matter**—away from the purpose; beside the point.

10. **Blunt**—dull. Dogberry means 'sharp'.

10-11. **God help**—God forbid.

11-12. **Honest as the skin between his brows**—"a proverbial expression of which Reed quotes other instances. The 'brows' probably because the eyes and forehead are supposed to be especially indicative of character."—(D.) The meaning is : "as honest as one can be who has his eyes and forehead."

N. B. Furness thinks that probably this phrase "arose from that fact that it was on the forehead that the brand of shameful conduct was set." Instead of coming straight to the point as desired by Leonato, Dogberry begins with an elaborate apology for Verges, who is shallow, witless and irrelevant. The humour lies in the fact that Dogberry himself is not free from these defects.

15. **Odorous**—a blunder for odious. **Palabras**—a blunder for "few words" (Spanish *pocas palabras*—a bit of Spanish commonly spoken in London in Shakespeare's days).

N. B. The humour consists of these 'Malapropisms' or blunders in the use of vocabulary. This is why Leonato finds the two constables tedious and dismisses them as quickly as possible, without caring to ascertain the vital information from their mouths.

19. **The poor duke's officers**—a blunder for "we are the Duke's poor officers." *Cf Measure for Measure*, II. i. 47 : "I am the poor duke's constable.

20. **Tedious**—wealthy. Dogberry thinks that tediousness is a fine virtue. **Bestow it**—bestow wealth.

21. **Of your worship**—on your worship.

22. **All thy tediousness on me, ha !**—'You have reserved all your notorious, tedious and long-winded speech for me, of all persons !' Leonato is asking in his anxiety to get off quickly to the church.

23. **An 't were a thousand pounds etc.**—as though the Duke had credited him with bestowing something valuable upon him. **A thousand pound**—the aggregate sum. He means a thousand times.

24. **Exclamation**—a blunder for 'acclamation' perhaps.

N. B. Dogberry speaks here as if he had bestowed something valuable (some money-present amounting to more than the aggregate sum of a thousand pound) upon him. All this illustrates the sublime self-conceit, vanity and stupidity of Dogberry, which Shakespeare copied from the real life of London.

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29. **To-night**—*i. e.*, the last night.

29-30. **Excepting your worship's presence**—"Verges means to say, 'if such a thing may be mentioned in your worshipful presence' ; but by the turn of the words he makes the Duke out to be the most arrant knave in Messina."

30. **Arrant**—"a variant of 'errant' (wandering, vagrant, vagabond) which, from its use in such expressions as arrant thief',—became an intensive, 'thorough, notorious, downright' especially from its original association with opprobrious names." There are instances of the word being used in a good sense, *e.g.*, Ford, *The Fancies* etc., III. ii.

" 'T is scarce possible
To distinguish one of these vile naughty jacks
From true and arrant ladies."

33. **When the age is in, the wit is out**—'when the ale is in, the wit it out'—this is the correct form of the proverb. Dogberry's version is an obvious blunder.

33-34. **It is a world to see**—wonderful to see ; worth seeing ; a treat to see. This is a common expression which was in use as early as Skelton's time as late as Strype's '*Annals of the Reformation*, first published in 1725.

34-35. **God's a good man**—another proverbial saying roughly equivalent to "All's right with the world."

35-36. **An two men ride of a horse.....behind**—"probably a proverb implying that the chief post of distinction can belong to but one, that where two are associated in any labour where one leads, the other must follow : though, like the words 'God's good man', this is but an imitation of the irrelevant talk, largely made up of old saws, which so often serves as a butt for the satire of the old dramatists as in Johnson's *Tale of a Day*, Middleton's *Blurt Master Constable*, etc."--(D.)

N. B. All this brings out Dogberry's vanity. It is really he who prevents the communication of the news of the arrest of the two knaves to Leonato, though he seeks to attribute the whole blame to Verges. His speeches are a tissue of misquotations from proverbs through which he displays the vanity of his superior knowledge.

36-37. **As ever broke bread**—as he is an honest man—such as ever lived on bread on earth.

37-38. **But God is to be worshippe'd.....alike**—"a condescending excuse for Verge's infirmities. God made him different from Verges, a common mortal and a very stupid fellow. *Cf.* Portia's speech in the *Merchant of Venice* (I. ii. 60) : "God made him, and therefore let him pass for a man.' In the same condescending strain, Dogberry replies to the Duke's ironical acknowledgment of his vast superiority to Verges, 'Gifts that God gives'."—(D.)

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Comment. Dogberry is so obsessed with his own importance that he is unable to appraise the value of anything else. His mind "works its way groping through a mist of delighted self-satisfaction." He is Shakespeare's wonderful creation—an immortal type of consequential and domineering Head Constable—an unforgettable character copied from real life with a touch of the grotesque in art.

39. **He comes too short of you**—you are vastly superior to your partner (Verges). This is said by Leonato ironically of Dogberry who is puffed up with the consciousness of his superiority.

43. **Comprehended and aspicious**—blunders for 'apprehended' and 'suspicious' respectively.

47. **Suffigance**—a blunder for 'sufficient'.

52-53. **Francis Seacoal**—normally it means a learned writer. Here it is the writer of police reports.

54. **Examination**—*i.e.*, to examine. "Dogberry mistakes the significance of words but never errs in the forms of speech ; he is not able to discriminate between sounds that are alike without being the same, but he is never at fault in grammar."—(Grant White). So the folio reading 'to examine' is correct.

56. **We will spare for no wit**—"it will not be for lack of wisdom if it is not done as it should be."

57. **A non-come**—"*i.e.*, to a *non-compos mentis* : put them out of their wits ; or perhaps he confounds the term with non-plus."—(Malone).

58. **Excommunication**—a blunder for 'communication' or 'examination' (Official report.)

Comment. When called upon by Leonato to examine the two arrested persons, Dogberry accepts this responsibility. He now asks Verges to bring Seacoal with his pen and inkhorn to the jail so that they may faithfully discharge this responsibility with all the wisdom they can command in order to bring two criminals to book. It will not be for lack of wisdom that justice will not be done. Dogberry touches his forehead saying that there is sufficient intelligence in him to put the criminals out of their wits. All that he wants is that some one is indeed to take down the deposition at the time of the cross examination of the two criminals and their witnesses.

The humour lies in the fact that while Dogberry claims to possess great wisdom, every line that he speaks bristles with mistakes, misquotations, malapropisms, etc.

59. **Goal**—jail.

Act IV : Scene I

Summary

The scene is in the church in which Claudio and Hero are to be married by the priest or the friar as he is called, in the presence of their friends and relatives—Leonato, Don Pedro (the prince),

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Don John, Benedick, Beatrice and attendants. Advised by Leonato to be brief regarding the actual ceremony of the marriage, Francis, the priest, proceeds at once to pronounce the marriage ceremony. Upon this the friar asks Claudio whether he had come to marry the lady Hero, to which the former replies in the negative. Leonato is surprised but supposes that the count's answer merely has a reference to the verbal inaccuracy of the friar's question. So he corrects him, 'To be married to her, friar, you come to marry her.' But when Leonato offers his daughter to Count Claudio, the latter rejects her, accusing her as a rotten orange. Leonato is not a little surprised at this, as the count now bursts into a fit of passion. Hero makes bold to ask, 'is my lord well that he speaks so wide ?' while Leonato appeals to Don Pedro to intervene. But the prince also openly condemns Hero and says that he feels himself dishonoured to link a dear friend of his with a common prostitute. He tells Leonato upon his honour that he himself, his brother Don John and the aggrieved Claudio has seen Hero talk to a ruffian at her chamber-window the previous night. Don John also confirms this. Overwhelmed at these grave charges and unjust accusation the innocent lady falls into a swoon, while the villain Don John conducts the prince and Claudio away. Benedick and Beatrice try their utmost to bring her round, but in vain. Leonato thinks that it is better she is dead than alive and wishes her not to recover from her swoon. Beatrice advises patience. She is positive that her cousin has been 'belied'. Still Leonato is not convinced of the innocence of his daughter.

By the time Hero recovers from her swoon, the friar, convinced of her innocence by the blushing of her face and her protestations, comes to her rescue. He now suggests that Hero should be publicly declared to be dead to the world. Should the allegations against her character be substantiated, she can be kept concealed in 'some reclusive and religious life' beyond the reach of scornful looks and remarks. The grief-stricken father accepts this advice of the father. Benedick also pledges his honour to deal justly with the whole matter and keep the supposed death of Hero a secret from the prince and Claudio.

At this stage Benedick and Beatrice, who have been consistently supporting Hero and been faithful to her in her hour of greatest need, are left alone together. They are now closer to each other than ever, after the crisis over Hero has somehow eased, and the way is now easy for a mutual confession of love. Beatrice is much grieved over the wrong done to her cousin. She desires the help of a man to right her slandered cousin. Benedick offers his services to her without any reservation. At this they make a mutual declaration of love for each other. Benedick agrees to challenge Claudio to a duel.

Dramatic Importance

This is the climax of the main plot. It is also the resolution of the comic under-plot, in that it represents the after-effects of the

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crisis reached in a previous scene. It falls naturally into two parts, *viz*, the repudiation of Hero making the turning-point of the play (the crowning instance of "much ado about nothing"), and the resolution of the comic plot, now welded into the serious. "The plot to ruin one match really achieves another" for the repudiation of Hero awakens the generous impulses of the two comic characters (Benedick and Beatrice)—and the heat of emotion thaws the barrier of icy coldness which their self-love had raised between them. This is what may be called "Comic nemesis in excelsi", Shakespeare's workmanship the interconnections between the main plot and the comic under-plot become essential and natural. The scene is also great—indeed the greatest—in the play as it is a great revealer of the real character of important personages under the stress of circumstances, *e.g.*, (1) Hero (who has been justly described as an early sketch of Desdemona) is stricken down in mute agony at the great crisis of her life; (2) Claudio unhesitatingly believes in the aspersions cast on Hero's character, for he is a man "who believes without hesitation and punishes without pity"; (3) Don John 'gloats in hypocritical cummunication like a lesser Iago' but unlike Iago, he indulges in no soliloquy and takes others into his confidence for Shakespeare's great villainous practice of self-revelation; (4) that Don Pedro is a poor judge of human nature whose credulous simplicity leads him to a grave error is proved by the moral support he lends to Claudio in the latter's repudiation of Hero.

The scene brings out the truth behind all the comedies of Shakespeare, *viz.*, in every comedy of his, central story verges on tragedy. "All Shakespeare's comedies lie close to sorrow; close at least to heartache. There is something revolting and absurd in the public denunciation of an innocent lady standing before the alter to be united in marriage to her betrothed, the unworthy conduct of two gentlemen (Claudio and Don Pedro) who condemn her without enquiry and of her father who joins the catechism, instead of defending her innocence. Leonato's hysterical lamentation over his daughter's unchastity is another typical instance of 'much ado about nothing', besides the repudiation and public denunciation of Hero which is, indeed, the crowning act and the turning-point of the play.

NOTES

1. **Be brief**—cut short the ceremonial part of the marriage.

2-3. **You shall recount their particular duties afterwards**—you shall address them afterwards more fully as to the natural duties of a husband and wife. An exhortation of this nature is contained in the ritual of the marriage ceremony, but over and above this it was customary for the priest to make a special address to newly-married couples. Such an address would, of course, be out of place on the stage. (D.)

4. **To marry this lady**—to get married to Hero.

6. **To be married to her**—Leonato supposes that Claudio's answer "No" merely had reference to the verbal inaccuracy of the friar's question, *viz.*, "to marry the lady". The real truth comes out

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when Count Claudio rejects Hero, when Leonato offers his daughter to him.

11-13. **If either of you know any.....if**—"the words in use in the marriage service at the present-day are almost the same; "I require and charge you both.....that if either of you know any impediment; why ye may not be lawfully joined together in matrimony, yet do now confess it."

12. **Conjoined**—joined together in marriage.

19. **Not knowing what they do**—Claudio says that some are dare devils, some indifferent and some thoughtless creatures who rush into marriage, marrying women who they know to be chaste but who subsequently turn out to false. He adds that thanks to the timely proof he has had of the unchastity of Hero, he has escaped such deceit. These thoughts surging through his mind, made him exclaim in the manner as above. Benedick, not understanding the inner meaning of these exclamations of Claudio, humorously quotes from the old grammar books.

20-21. **Some be of laughing, as ah, ha, he**—"A quotation from the old grammars. *Cf.* Lyly: *Endymion*, 159, where one of the characters exclaims, 'Hey-ho! what's that?' another asks; and the reply is, 'An interjection, whereof some are of mourning, as eho, vah'." —(Rolfe.)

N. B. Benedick is quoting from the old grammars and says "If there are interjections of weeping, there may be interjections of laughing, such as, 'ah, ha, he'."

22. **Stand thee by**—stand aside. **Father**—Leonato. (The would-be father-in-law may be so addressed even before marriage).

23. **Free and unconstrained soul**—without any restraint.

27. **Counterpoise**—balance.

28. **Render**—give back. It is understood metaphorically by all but literally by Claudio and Don Pedro.

29. **Learn**—teach.

32. **The sign and semblance**—she keeps up an outward appearance of honour without the soul.

34. **Authority**—guarantee.

35. **Withal**—with it.

36. **Comes**—*i.e.*, into her cheeks, offering itself as a witness of her innocence and virture. **Modest evidence**—evidence of modesty.

37. **Simple virtue**—pure character.

34-37. **O! what authority and show of truth.....virtue?**—Hero looks as modest and 'chaste as is the bud ere it be blown' under cover of truth, honesty and innocence, she is trying to hide an inner life of sin through the smile that is playing upon her lips and the blushes on her face.

39. **By these exterior shows?**—judging by these external looks.

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40. **Luxurious**—lustful; lascivious. It is used in a bad sense

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as elsewhere in Shakespeare, meaning 'wanton', 'loose'. **A luxurious bed**—a bed of lustful incest.

42. **Not to be married**—*i.e.*, I mean not to be married.

43. **Not to knite**—not to join. **An approved wanton**—a loose woman whose lust has been proved.

44. **In your own proof**—having made proof of her ; in your own trial of her ; in your example.

45-46. **Have vanquish'd the resistance .....virginity**—'have, by your importunity, taken advantage of her youth and overcome her scruples of modesty'. **Made defeat**—accomplished the ruin of.

47. **Known her**—*i.e.*, casually enjoyed her.

48-49. **You 'll say she did.....sin**—you will say that, being betrothed to me, she already looked upon me as her husband, so will palliate her guilt on grounds that she did but 'prematurely grant me conjugal rights.' **The 'forehand sin**—the sin which consisted in the deed being premature.

N. B. Betrothal in Shakespeare's day was looked upon as a contract much more binding than the 'engagement' of modern times, and was accompanied by certain ceremonies such as the joining of hands before witnesses, the exchange of kisses and the interchange of rings. The result of these betrothals was subsequent seduction was not considered so heinous as if there had been no contract.—(D.)

51. **To large**—licentious.

49-53. **And so extenuate the 'forehand sin.....comely love**—Claudio says that he never tempted her 'with words too large' (*i. e.*, licentious) nor did he ever treat her with no more liberty than that shown by a brother to a sister. Leonato thinks that possibly Claudio himself had spoiled her virginity before the marriage ceremony. In that case her sin (if at all) could be extenuated. For this kind of conduct on his part might be considered that Hero had taken Claudio as her husband even if the 'formal' ceremony might not have been gone through. So Claudio pointedly asks : "Did not I show you 'bashful sincerity and comely love' to you ? Did I present any sign of lust or levity in my conduct before marriage ?"

53. **Bashful sincerity**—Hero and Claudio never appeared alone together, and therefore they are different from other lovers in Shakespeare. **Comely**—beautiful.

55. **Out on thee ! seeming !**—'a plague on your bashful sincerity and comely love.'

56. **You seem to me as Dian**—from your appearance one would suppose you to be a Diana. **Diana**—the moon ; the type of chastity.

N. B. Hanmer reads 'you seem'd', which Malone has also conjectured. He is followed by Dyce also. But this is scarcely an improvement. The contrast is between 'seem' in this line and 'ere' in the line below.

56-60. **You seem to me as Dian.....sensuality**—Leonato has

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just suggested that if anybody had violated Hero's modesty, it was Perhaps Claudio himself. Claudio says that he never tempted her with any improper word or action. He always treated her with no more freedom than that shown by a brother to a sister. To this Hero asks him whether she had ever seemed otherwise to him. Claudio in anger says that he will proclaim in writing that although she *seems* to him quite chaste as Diana herself, she has really been more intemperate than Venus and sensuous than savage beasts.

57. **As is the bud ere it be blown**—"before the air has tasted its sweetness."—(Johnson).

59-60. **Those pamper'd animals.....sensuality**—"those highly fed animals that have no hard work which might keep down their sensual propensities."—(D).

61. **So wide**—so far from the purpose ; far from the truth ; so extravagantly. The suggested alteration of 'wild' is useless here.

62. **Sweet prince, why speak not you**—Dyce, Delius and others ascribe "Sweet Prince" to Claudio, but it seems more natural and proper to give these words to Leonato who is appealing to Don Pedro (the prince) to help him out of the difficulty. **What should I speak**—what can I possibly say ?

64. **Stale**—prostitute (*lit.*, that which has stood too long and so become rapid, tainted.)

65. **Are these things spoken, or do I but dream ?**—am I to believe in the evidence of my ears that such things are actually spoken, or do I dream ? *Cf. Macbeth*, I. iii. 83 :

> "Were such things here, as we do speak about ?
> Or have we eaten on the insane root
> That takes the reason prisoner ?"

66. **Sir, they are spoken, and.....true**—not only are they spoken, but also they are true.

67. **Nuptial**—Shakespeare uses the singular form. We use the plural form, *i.e.*, nuptials=marriage. **True, O God !**—Hero is shocked. "These things true ! O God." It is not in reply to Benedick, but heart-broken echo of Don John, "these things are true."

68. **Stand I here**—the reply to Leonato's question, "Do I but dream ?'

72. **Move one question**—raise only one question.

73. **Kindly**—natural ; that which you desire from nature.

77. **What kind of catechizing call you this ?**—a reference to church catechism, the first question in which is, "What is your name ?"

78. **To make you answer truly etc.**—What is the object of your catechizing me, says Hero by implication ; the object of which, replies Claudio, is to make you answer truly etc. Hero, bewildered by the strange turn which the proceedings have taken, answers literally "It is not Hero, the same as ever, and as free from taint ?"—(D).

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79. **Blot**—taint.

80. **Just reproach**—true denunciation.

81. **Hero itself can blot out Hero's virtue**—when Hero says that nobody could blot her name 'Hero' with any grave reproach on her character, to this Claudio replies that the name 'Hero' itself is sufficient to remove the reputation of Hero as a virtuous lady, for her name has become a byword for want of chastity and can no longer stand for a virtuous lady in the face of the incident at her chamber-window, which she cannot disprove.

83. **Out at your window**—standing outside, close to your window.

84. **If you are a maid**—if you are as chaste and free from reproach as you pretended to be, you will not hesitate to answer this question.

86. **You no maiden.**—if you had admitted that you were talking to a man at your window, and had explained how it happened, we might perhaps be still able to believe in your innocence ; but as you deny that to which we were all witnesses, it is no longer possible for us to have any faith in you."—(D.)

91. **Most like a liberal villain**—with all the unblushing effrontery of a villain. **Liberal**—licentious.

92. **Confess'd**—when and where this confession was made ? How Don Pedro says this. No confession was made anywhere. **Vile encounters**—wicked meeting with a ruffian in secret.

Comment. Don Pedro says that before this secret meeting as between her and the ruffian, the latter has also confessed to them that he has met Hero in secret a thousand time earlier. This latter statement of Borachio is contrary to the facts of the case. If this were a fact, the fraud would have come to light long ago.

94. **Fie, fie ! etc.**—Notice the tone of sanctimonious hypocrisy underlying the villain Don John's speech. Don Pedro, who had to suffer for his bastard brother's villainy, ought to have spotted him out, but he is a very poor judge of human nature and acts like a blind man in being deceived by this nefarious plot of Don John and Borachio.

96-97. **There is not chastity enough.....utter them**—no language has a vocabulary which could utter them without using terms that would shock the hearer by the use of indecent expressions.

98. **Much misgovernment**—exceeding lack of continuence ; self-restraint ; great misconduct (much=great).

99. **O Hero ! what a Hero etc.**—Claudio wonders at Hero's *fairness* and *foulness* at the same time. She could have been a great woman if she had been equally gracefull in her conduct as she is in appearance.

N. B. "Johnson imagines a poor conceit upon the second 'Hero'; but it is almost impossible to believe that in a scene so

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solemn, Shakespeare would have represented the person most deeply interested in the matter as making a wretched pun."—(D.)

102. **Most foul**—most wretched in character. **Most fair**—most graceful in appearance.

103. **Thou pure impiety, and impious purity**—confirmed in his belief in the unfaithfulness of Hero, Claudio finally repudiates her in these terms and bids farewell to her love. She is foul and fair at the same time—pure as well as impious. The *foulness* refers to her character while fairness has reference to her appearance ; the purity is in her handsome appearance while impiety refers to her conduct. This is a fine illustration of the figure 'Oxymorn'. *Cf.* Tennyson :

> "His honour rooted in dishonour stood,
> And faith unfaithful kept him falsely true."
> —*Launcelot and Elaine*, lines 871-72.

104. **For thee**—on thy account.

105. **Conjecture**—suspicion.

104-07. **For thee I'll lock up all.....more be gracious**—having profited from his bitter experience, Claudio would never afterwards persuade himself to fall in love again. He would never be able to look upon beauty without suspicion and without thoughts of evil. **Gracious**—attractive.

108. **Hath no man's dagger**—what Leonato wanted was not a dagger. He wanted a sensible woman to bring him into spirits.

122. **Smother**—stifle.

116-17. **Death is the fairest cover for.....wished for**—death is perhaps the fairest thing one can wish for to screen her from disgrace.

119. **Dost thou look up !**—do you venture to take courage to be cheerful. **Wherefore should she not**—this a very sensible utterance of her Friar.

122. **The story that is printed**—that is the story which her blushes discover to be true. "But we find the Friar afterwards referring to the 'thousand blushing apparitions' he had noted in her face, and this may be a similar reference."—(Rolfe.) **Blood**—blushes (not passion).

125. **Spirits**—vital powers of forces.

126. **On the rearward**—after heaping reproaches upon you, "would still come after them to furnish what they had only done by halves."—(Schmidt) ; behind the back of reproaches. 'Rearward's is elsewhere printed 'reward'.

126-27. **Myself would on the rearward.....at thy life**—if I had thought your vital forces were stronger than your shame, I would first heap reproaches upon you and then proceed to finish your life by completing what reproaches have but half done.

127-28. **Grieved I, I had but one.....Nature's frame ?**—"Did I formerly grieve that I had only one child, and scold at the parsi-

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monious dispensation of Nature that gave me that one child only ?" —(Delius).

132. **At my gates**—"a foundling that had been left at my gates by some poor woman unable to bring it up herself."

133. **Smirched**—sullied ; smeered. **Who smirched thus**—*Cf. Merchant of Venice*, IV. i. 134 :

"The churlish spirit,
Govern'd a wolf who hang'd for human slaughter,
Even from the gallows did his fell soul fleet."

135. **Derives itself**—has its origin.

136. **Mine I loved and mine I praised**—*i. e.*, she who was so much mine that my own self seemed unimportant to myself, so highly did I value her, and whom I praised.

138-39. **That I myself was to.....of her**—mine so wholly that, in my estimation of her, she seemed more myself, than I myself was. In the husband ritual the husband speaks of the wife as 'flesh of my flesh, bone of my bone,'' and here Leonato speaks of Hero as if she had been something even more than this.

140. **Into a pit of ink**—black contamination.

139-43. **O, she is fellen, into a pit.....tained flesh**—This is how the injured old gentlemen, Leonato, is lamenting the degradation of the character of his daughter Hero, after her repudiation by Claudio. It seems to him as if she has fallen into a pit of ink which has so blackened her character irretrievably beyond any possibility of purification. The great ocean will not be able to wash away the stain and preserve her defiled body by means of salt, from inevitable purtefaction.

140-41. **The wide sea hath drops too few.....clean again**—the wide, wide ocean will fail to wash away the stain or the blot on her character.

142-43. **And salt too little, which.....flesh**—all the salt in the sea would hardly be sufficient to keep her flesh from decay. *Cf. Macbeth*, II. ii. 60 :

"Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood clean from my hand ?''

N. B. The metaphor is taken from the preserving of meat by means of salt.

144. **Attired in wonder**—wrapped up in astonishment. *Cf. Lucrece* ; "Why are you thus attir'd in discontent ?"

151. **Barr'd up**—strengthened by.

154. **Hence from her**—away from her ; leave her to herself.

156. **I have only been silent**—I alone have been silent.

157. **This course of fortune**—this chapter of accidents.

158. **By noting of the Lady**—because of carefully watching the lady.

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159. **A thousand blushing apparitions**— the blushes which suddenly appeared in her cheeks and were as quickly succeeded by the paleness of frightened innocence.

163. **To burn errors**—as though they were heretics.

Comment. Leonato in spite of his gray hair is an impulsive and emotional type of old man almost in senile decay, as otherwise, fathers generally have charitable thoughts about their daughters. Alone among all the people in the church, the fair is full convinced of Hero's innocence from her very looks—her blushes in particular, which suddenly started into her face only to be succeeded by angel-like witeness and paleness in her cheeks. He has seen in her eyes a fire capable of burning all the erroneous thoughts that Don Pedro, Count Claudio and others have cherished regarding her chastity.

166. **Experimental seal**—the seal of long experience on the part of the Friar attests of what he had read on the face of Hero.

167. **Tenour** –tenure. **Book**—*i. e.*, reading : my knowledge derived from books.

168. **Calling**— sacred profession. **Divinity**— knowledge of sacred things ; theology.

170. **Biting error**—cruel mistake.

171. **Grace**—the only redeeming good quality.

172-73. **That she will not.....of perjury**—*i. e.*, the only redeeming quality is that she will not add to her damnable guilt the sin of swearing that she has not done anything wrong.

183. **Maintain'd the change of words**—interchanged words with; kept up a conversation with.

184. **Refuse**—disown.

185. **Misprision**—misunderstanding ; mistake. **Princes**—*i.e.*, Claudio, Don Pedro and Don John.

186. **The very bent of honour**—"the very highest degree of tendency or leaning or bias of the mind; *i.e.*, at least two of them are men with the fullest stretch honour.

188. **The Pracaice**—the contriving (used in a bad sense). **Lives**—or, lies. *Lives*—seems more forcible than 'lies' for which it was supposed to be a misprint and means 'has its vitality from'!

189. **Whose spirits toil in frame of villanies**—whose energies spend themselves upon the fashioning of villainous schemes.

190. **But truth of her**—nothing more than the truth regarding her.

191. **If they wrong her honour**—if, on the other hand, they injure her honour

192. **Shall well hear of it**—"I shall not tamely sit quiet, but will call them to a rigorous account, proud and of high rank as they may be."

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193. **Time hath not yet so dried.....mine**—time has not yet written wrinkles on my face and withered me as yet.

194. **Nor age so eat up my invention**—nor has age affected my thinking capacity of creativity.

195. **Nor fortune made.....means**—nor have I been impoverished by reverses in my fortune.

196. **Nor my bad life.....friend**—nor has my life been so ill-spent as to drive my friends from my side.

197. **Awaked in such a kind**—in me when aroused in such a manner.

200. **To quit me of them throughly**—to requite them fully; make myself thoroughly even with them for their ill deeds. **Throughly**—thoroughly.

202. **The princes**—Don Pedro, Claudio and Don John.

203. **Secretly kept in**—kept in retirement where no one shall know of her existence and think her dead.

205. **Mourning ostentation**— keeping up an appearance of mourning, (*i.e.*, appropriate funeral ceremonies and customs), as if she were dead and gone from this world.

206-07. **And on your family's old.....epitaphs**—and affix to the hearse of the deceased short laudatory poems as epitaphs—a common custom on the continent in Shakespear's day. It has prevailed formerly in England also.

209. **What shall become**—what good will come out of this.

211. **Remorse**—pity (in general), and regret (in particular).

212. **But not for that dream.....course**—but it is not only with that hope that I advise this course which seems to you so vague and strange. In using the word 'dream' he is looking at the matter from their point of view rather than from his own, far from that there is nothing vague or dreamy in his project.

213. **But on this travail look for greater birth**—this labour will produce still greater results. The metaphor is from child-birth.

214. **As it must be maintained**—for so we must assert the face to have been.

215. **Upon the instant that she was accused**—the moment she is charged with base aspersions on her character.

217-22. **For it so falls out that.....if was ours**—The Friar's suggestion is that Leonato should give out that Hero was dead and should also proceed with her funeral rites, maintaining a kind of mourning ostentation, while at the same time she should be kept secretly in a safe place. The result of this course of action will be that she will be pitied and pardoned by every hearer and the attitude of the people would also change from slander to pity, for we do not usually appraise the full value of our dear possession till we have lost it.

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220. **We rack the value**—stretch or exaggerate its worth. This expression is preserved in *rack-rent* which means stretching the rent beyond the normal limit. "A rent which is equivalent or nearly equivalent in amount to the full annual value of the land is a *rack-rent*."—(Steevens).

223. **Upon his words**—in consequence of his words.

224. **Idea**—image.

225. **His study of imagination**—when he gives free play to his imagination ; when he allows his imagination to work.

226. **Every lovely organ of her life**—all her personal graces of feature and figure.

227. **Habit**—dress ; appearance.

228. **Moving-delicate**—delicately or impressively graceful.

229. **Eye and prospect**—immediate and ultimate vision.

231. **If ever love had.....liver**—if ever love touched his heart. In Shakespeare's time the liver was supposed to be the seat of love. 'Liver' is the promoter of love, courage, and noble affections. Allusions to it are frequent in Shakespeare.

233. **Though he thought his accusation true**—however certain he might be of the truth of his accusation.

234. **Success**—the sequal, whether good or bad.

236. **In likelihood**—in conjecture.

237-39. **But if all aim but this..... infamy**—but if (though I hope for better things) we should not in any other respect hit the mark at which we fim, *i.e.*, if we should altogether fall to re-establish Hero's character, the supposition of her death will, at all events, stop the tongues of those who would otherwise always be exclaiming at her guilt. **Will quench**—her immediate death will stop discussion about her immodesty and slander.

240. **If it short not well**—if it does not turn out well.

242. **Reclusive**—secluded ; cloistered. **Religious**—conventual.

243. **Out of all eyes, tongues.....Injuries**—beyond the reach of slander, scornful look, caustic remarks calculated to throw aspersions on her character. **Injuries**—injurious looks, remarks, thoughts and actions.

244. **Advise**—be your adviser in the matter.

245. **Inwardness**—intimacy ; frindship.

246. **Much**—great.

249. **Should**—would be certain to deal. **Being that I flow in grief**—it being that I abound in grief ; but also with the idea of going readily in any direction. Dr. Johnson remarks : "Man overpowered with distress eagerly listens to the first offers of relief, close with every scheme and believe every promise. He, that has no

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longer any confidence in himself, is glad to repose his trust in any other that will undertake to guide him. **Flow**—*i. e.*, float.

251. **Well consented**—well agreed to.

252. **For to strange sores, etc.**—desperate diseases required heroic remedies. *Cf. Hamlet*. IV. iii. 9 :

"Diseases desperate grown
By desperate appliance are relieved."

254. **Prolong'd**—postponed.

255. **Lady Beatrice, etc.**—this is perhaps the finest piece of the play. Beatrice does not go with Hero. Benedick detains her forcibly, and probably she stays back because she needs his help.

258. **Freely**—"there is no need for you to do that, for I weep of my own accord, without being desired by anyone."—(D.)

260. **Deserve of me**—deserve and obtain from me.

263. **Even**—plain.

265. **But not yours**—*i.e.*, whom I hardly consider a man.

268-69. **It were as possible for me to say**—as to believe what you say.

271. **I am sorry for my cousin**—if you wish to make me confess that I love you, you will do something to avenge my cousin.

272. **By my sword**—"to swear by one's sword was to swear by the cross, the hilt in those days forming, with the handle, a cross."

273. **Eat it**—Beatrice means the oath he has sworn, while Benedick takes the expression literally.

276. **Eat your word**—recant or withdraw your word.

277. **With no sauce etc.**—I will not recant the word even with the *sauce* of blows that you may be pleased to administer.

279. **God forgive me**—God help me, *i.e.*, for being loved by you, but Benedick pretends to take the word literally and asks, 'Forgive you for what offence' ?

281. **In a happy hour**—just at the right moment.

283. **And do it**—then do it.

287. **Kill Claudio**—These two words reveal the intensity of feeling of Beatrice, which comes out of her uncompromising demand ; revealing as they do, the depths of her righteous indignation, in response to Benedick's offer : "Come, bid me do anything."

289. **To deny it**—*i.e.*, by refusing.

291. **I am gone, though I am here**—"I am gone, am lost to you, while still here in the body,"—(Delius) : said she, as she is forcibly detained by Benedick.

295. **We 'll be friends first**—I will be friends with you first.

299. **Approved**—proved. **In the height a villain**—a villain in the highest degree.

301. **Bear her in hand**—keep her in false hope ; delude her into the belief that all was well.

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301-02. **Take hands**—strike at her.

302. **Uncovered slander**—open calumny.

303. **Unmitigated rancour**—extreme violence.

303-04. **I would eat his heart**—I cry for his blood and hunger for revenge.

306-07. **A proper saying**—a fine thing to say ! Absurd !

312. **Princes and counties**—they are fine fellows to call themselves princes and counts. They have much that is noble in them.

313. **Goodly count, Count Comfect**—Beatrice exposes the thoroughly despicable character (Count Claudio) and ridicules him by saying "Count Comfect" (My Lord Lollipop), who has no earthly excuse for his meanness. (As Mrs. Jameson says, 'She, a governor's daughter, is accused of incontinence with a valet at the altar !") This speech springs from a noble and righteous fury—the fury of kindled strength ; but in the very measure of her strength the woman is made, with finest truth, to find the measure of her weakness, Beatrice, in the hour of her self-revelation, cries aloud for the powers of the sex that has hitherto been the butt of her scorn.

315. **For my sake**—the former (in line 314) means "so that I might meet him, man for man" ; the latter on my account, to serve me.

315-16. **But manhood is melted into curtesies**—when after reciprocating love for each other, Beatrice wants Benedick to kill Claudio, for the great harm he has done to her cousin, Hero. Benedick, hesitates, as Claudio is a friend of his. Beatrice is afforded an opportunity for a tirade against men in general, who were full of valour in former days but who have now degenerated into a race of glib talkers satisfied with the making of courtesies and compliments only. **Curtesies**—mere forms of courtesy.

317. **Tongue**—mere words. **Trim ones**—fine *i.e.*, empty nothings, palaver and nothing else. People of these days merely rest satisfied with keeping up empty forms of courtesy and indulging in nice and empty nothing, mere idle talk, cajolry and nothing else. **Is now as vailent**—is accounted as valient.

318-19. **With wishing, therefore, ...grieving**—by wishing through grieving.

321. **Use it for love etc.**—if you wish to win my love you must make some other use of your hand than that of merely swearing by it, *i.e.*, you must kill Claudio.

326. **Engag'd**—pledged to your service.

328. **Dear**—heavy.

329. **I must say she is dead**—I must pretend, as it has been agreed upon, that she (Hero) is dead.

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Act IV : Scene II

Summary

This scene is laid in the Constable's room where Dogberry and Verges proceed to examine Borachio and Conrade. At first they conduct the examination in their usual stupid manner, alone committing the most ridiculous blunders. If they had gone on like this, the facts of the case could not have come to light and the tragedy could not have been averted. Fortunately they have a valuable colleague in the sensible Sexton, who helps them by writing down on paper statements made by the accused. The Sexton is the town clerk, whose business is to take down the depositions of prisoners.

When the two accused persons in the course of their examination by Dogberry and Verges deny that they are 'false villains', the Sexton very wisely suggests that the first watch should be asked to come forth to give his evidence. The first watchman pointing out Borachio to Dogberry says that, this man had said that Don John, the prince's brother, is a villain. The second watchman says that he heard the two accused say that one of them received a thousand ducats from Don John for accusing the lady Hero wrongfully. The first watchman now says that they also heard them say that Count Claudio contrived to disgrace Hero before the whole assembly in the church and not to marry her.

The Sexton, at this stage informs Dogberry and Verges that all this villainy had already been executed, *viz.*, Hero has been accused before the assembly and consequently she died of grief. The truth of the disclosure made by Borachio is now confirmed by the Sexton who informs them that Don John had secretly stolen away that morning.

The Sexton then proceeds to Leonato's house to report to him the confession of the accused asking the two constables to bind the criminals and take them before Leonato. When Dogberry orders the two criminals to be opinioned (he means 'pinioned'), Conrade asks him to quit the place, and calls him 'an ass'. At this Dogberry's vanity is hurt. He wishes the Sexton were present to record this statement.

Dramatic Importance

The scene brings to light the villainy of Don John and his accomplices and ends with a highly amusing exhibition of Dogberry's wounded vanity. The fourth Act begins with tragedy after the conflict has led this crisis, but ends with the speech of Dogberry which is undoubtedly "one of the triumphs of the literature of broad humour." This scene also marks another stage in the resolution or falling action, depicting the after-effects of the crisis. The statement of the watch about the disclosures made by Borachio, as correctly recorded by the Sexton, advances the action of the main plot still further towards the untying of the knot or resolution of the conflict, "Hardly has Hero been accused in the church when her innocence is proved elsewhere."

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NOTES

S. D. **Gowns**—the black gown of office usually worn by constables in Shakespeare's time. "It appears from the *Black Book*, 1604, that this was the dress of a constable in our author's time ; 'when they meet their constable, and saw the black gown of his office lie full in a puddle'."—(Malone).

1. **Dissembly**—a blunder for 'assembly'. **Appeared**—has appeared.

2. **For the Sexton**—who is a sort of president, and directs the examination.

3. **Malefactors**—criminals. Dogberry answers that he and his partner Verges are 'malefactors', evidently mistaking the word for a high rounding word calculated to add to the dignity of their high office.

5-6. **We have the exhibition to examine**—"we have the examination to 'exhibit'."—(Steevens).

8. **Master constable**—Head constable, Dogberry.

12. **Sirrah**—a term of contempt for 'fellow'.

16. **Yea, sir, we hope**—These words, omitted in the folios, but necessary to the sense, were restored by Theobald. Their omission was probably due to fear of the statute of James I, forbidding the use of God's name on the stage.

18. **God defend**—God forbid.

19. **It is proved**—followed by "it will go near to be thought so shortly", is, of course, one of Dogberry's absurd anticlimaxes ? —(D.)

23. **A marvellous witty fellow, I assure you**—a most clever fellow no doubt.

23-24. **I will go about with him**—seem to mean "will circumvent him' rather than 'go to work with'. The explanation given by Schmidt : 'I will manage him.'

27-28. **In a tale**—in one tale, *i.e.*, tell the same story.

29. **You go not the way to examine**—this is not the way to examine.

31. **Eftest**—quickest ; best. This is perhaps a blunder for 'deftest'=most clever.

37. **Perjury**—a blunder for 'treason', as below, 'burglary' for 'conspiracy', and 'redemption' for 'damnation'.

40. **I promise thee**—I assure you.

47-48. **Upon his words**—basing his accusation upon Borachio's statements.

51. **Redemption**—damnation.

56. **Refused**—rejected by Claudio. **Upon**—in consequence of.

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60. **Opinioned**—a blunder for 'pinioned'—hand-cuffed.

61. **Let them be in the hands**—The reading of the old editions was "Let them be in the hands of Coxcombe." Malone restored the generally accepted reading given in the text.

62. **Coxcomb**—a clown ; fool. It is because clown in those days used to wear head-dress which looked like the cock's head.

63. **God's my life**—God is my life. Its abbreviated form is 'God's life' being used to avoid the penalty referred to above.

64-65. **Thou naughty varlet**—vile rascal.

67. **Supect**—a blunder for 'respect, ; 'piety' is another for 'impiety'.

68. **He**—the Sexton.

70. **That I am an ass**—he (Dogberry), of course, means that he has been called so.

74. **As pretty a piece of flesh**—as fine a fellow as any one etc. *Cf. Twelfth Night*, I. v. 30 : "Thou wert as witty a piece of Eve's flesh as any in Illyria".

76. **That hath had losses**—who was once even better off that I am now ; a not uncommon form of boastfulness.

Act V : Scene I

Summary

Leonato is with his brother, Antonio, inconsolately plunged in grief at the sad turn events have taken. Taking his cue from his brother who suggests that it is time he made the offenders suffer. Instead of suffering for the wrongs perpetrated upon him silently, Leonato suspects that Hero has been grievously wronged by Claudio and the prince, and he now determines to be avenged on them. Just then the two offenders, Claudio and the prince, arrive on the scene. Leonato challenges Claudio to answer with the sword the great injury he and his friend, Don Pedro, have done to his daughter, Hero, by slandering her character, calling him a dissembler and a villain. Antonio also challenges Claudio to a duel. Don Pedro says that although he is sorry for Hero's death, he maintains that she was charged with 'nothing' that was not substantially true and very full of proof. At this both the brothers leave the scene to prepare themselves for the duel.

Don Pedro and Claudio meet Benedick whom they have been looking for to drive away their sadness by his wit, on account of being challenged by the two brothers—Leonato and Antonio. Benedick, who has already taken a pledge to be Hero's champion, answers that all his wit lay in his scabbard and asks whether he should draw his sword to give them an appropriate reply for having killed Hero. But Claudio and Don Pedro only make fun of the usually light-hearted Benedick for his sudden exhibition of temper and attribute his changed manners to his love for Beatrice. Benedick leaves them to get ready for a fight.

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Soon after the departure of Benedick, Dogberry and Verges appear on the scene, followed by Borachio and Conrade with their hands bound. Don Pedro and Claudio ask the Head constable about the offence of the two prisoners. Borachio confesses to them the whole crime—how Don John had induced him to slander the lady Hero and how he successfully duped the prince and Claudio by showing himself in conversation with Margaret, dressed in Hero's clothing, from her chamber-window. Having now learnt the real truth about Hero, Claudio and Don Pedro now feel sincerely repen tant. About this time enter Leonato, his brother and the Sexton. The Sexton has already informed Leonato about Hero. Don Pedro and Claudio now plead that they sinned not but in mistaking and ask for Leonato's forgiveness. They undertake to endure any penance which the old man may choose for them. The penance Leonato enjoins upon Claudio is to marry next morning a cousin of Hero's —his heir. To this Claudio readily agrees. Leonato suspects Margaret to be in league with the two villains, but Borachio absolves her by testifying to her innocence. Dogberry now complains among other things to Leonato that he has been called 'an ass' by the offender. Leonato rewards Dogberry for his pains and promises further investigation into the matter, after fixing the next morning for Claudio's marriage.

Dramatic Importance

The scene presents the effect of the catastrophe of the previous Act on the chief characters of the play. It throws fresh sidelights on some aspects of the characters under the stress of circumstances. Leonato's passionate impetuous and emotional nature breaks down under the stress to trouble. He gives himself up to grief and is utterly inconsolable. He flares up at the idea of vengeance. This prepares us for his violent outbursts later in the same scene. Claudio's bearing towards Leonato at the latter's accusation of him, deepens our contempt for him. His repudiation of Hero is tragic. His action in accusing Hero before the altar in the presence of all the guests, shows his absolute want of delicacy and consideration for the feelings of others. "His instincts are egotistical. He is a gentleman upon reflection." Benedick is a different man altogether under the influence of his love for Beatrice.

NOTES

1. **If you go on thus.....yourself**—you will kill yourself if you continue in this frame of your mind.

2. **Second**—assist.

4. **Profitless**—useless.

5-7. **Give not me counsel ; nor let.....suit with mine**—Leonato is inconsolable. When his brother Antonio tries to console him, he says, let no one try to comfort him, as nobody can bring him comfort except one who has suffered a like misfortune, for only such a person who has undergone similar suffering can really understand the intensity and depth of his grief. This is a dramatic

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necessity as otherwise his challenge of Claudio shortly afterwards would not seem natural. Note that Leonato's impulsive passionate and emotional nature is characteristically Italian.

6. **Nor let no comforter**—let no one try to comfort me with sweet words except such a man whose wrongs are similar to mine.

7. **Suit with mine**—match with or accord with mine.

9. **Joy of her**—delight in her.

10. **Patience**—Note that the verse here halts woefully, even if this word be pronounced distinctly as a tri-syllable, as suggested by Rolfe.

11. **Measure his woe the length and breadth of mine**—let his woe be measured to be as great as mine length and breadth.

12. **Strain for strain**—feeling for feeling; i.e., let his grief exactly resemble mine, *Cf. Coriolanus*, V. iii. : "Thou hast affected the fine 'strains' of honour."

16. **And sorrow wag, cry 'hem'! when he should groan**—this is perhaps the most difficult line in the whole play. The original reading is "And sorrow, wagge, crie hem. When he should grone." This makes little sense, and as such, this line needs amendment and emendation. Various editors and annotators have suggested different reading *e.g.*, Dr. Johnson, Steevens, Rowe and Pope, Malone and Capell. Dapell's emendation is incomparably the best. It makes sense, fits in with the context and is accepted by many editors. It should not be objected to because the word 'bid' occurs in the seventh line above this line (*i.e.*, in the tenth line). The next emendation which has found favour with editors is that of Dr. Johnson whose reading is: "Cry, sorrow, wag, and hem"—meaning, "if he will smile and cry, 'sorrow be gone' and hem instead of groaning." But this is far-fetched, harsh and so hardly acceptable. **To wag**—Shakespeare uses this word in the sense of 'to go'; 'to pack off'. **To hem**—means to clear the throat. **Cry hem**—talk down the first spurt of sorrow by crying out *hem*.

15-19. **If such a one will smile and.....will gather patience**—Leonato in his great sorrow says that the only man who could give him solace is he who has suffered the same calamity as he himself, and is yet able to smile and drown his sorrow with proverbs to give him sententious comfort. He is sure that his brother Antonio will not be able to find such a man and so he is inconsolable in his sorrow. There never was a philosopher who could endure his toothache patiently, *i.e.*, there is no man who can be patient when he himself is the sufferer.

18. **Candle-wasters**—according to Whalley, this term was in use of those who wasted the midnight oil in 'study'. This interpretation is in keeping with the general sentiment, "Show me a man who has my weight of sorrow and wrong, and yet is an example of stoical, of cheerful endurance, and I will follow your counsel. **Yet—even now.**

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20. **But there is no such man**—no man can afford to be patient if he himself is the sufferer. People who do not have to bear sorrow on their personal accounts preach patience.

22. **Tasting it**—*i.e.*, they tasting it.

23. **Passion**—strong feeling.

24. **Preceptial medicine**—the medicine of precepts, the proverbs and wise reflections referred to above ; proverbial sayings.

26. **Air**—mere empty breath.

23-26. **Their counsels turns to passion.....and agony with words**—when they taste grief, wisdom is changed into passion, although before they would have applied the medicine of precepts to the passions of others, tried to chain up a strong madman with a silken thread, to cure pain with air, and mental agony with mere words.

27. **To speak patience**—to counsel patience, (which they can well afford to do, as they have not to suffer from sorrow themselves).

28. **Wring**—writhe in agony.

29. **Sufficiency**—stoical endurance.

30. **So moral**—so full of wise reflections.

32. **My griefs cry louder than advertisement**—"my grief cry louder than your moral exhortation." **Advertisement**—"moral instruction."—(Dr. Johnson).

33. **Therein do man from.....differ**—you are like a child crying so loudly that you cannot hear moral instructions from any quarter.

34. **Peace**—be silent. **I will be flesh and blood**—I will give way to natural feelings and not pretend to be above them like the philosophers.

35. **Philosopher**—refers to stoic.

37. **Writ the style of gods**—'written in an exalted language', such as we may suppose would be written by beings superior to human calamities and therefore regarding them with neglect and coldness : "afforded superiority to human weakness."—(Smith).

38. **Made a push at chance and sufferance**—'made light of misfortunes (or the changes of fortune) and pain' as stoic philosophers used to pretend. "The contempt for pain which these philosophers pretended to feel, is satirized here." **Sufferance**—suffering.

37-38. **However they have writ the style of gods.....sufferance**—written in a style of gods and made light of misfortunes and sufferings. Even the wisest of philosopher, full of wise saws and sententious utterances who affect superiority to human weakness, are unable to bear a mild pain.

46. **Good den**—good-evening.

47. **We have some haste**—Don Pedro is plainly embarrassed and wants to escape.

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49. **Are you hasty now ?**—'you were not always so anxious to escape our society ; you could spare plenty of time before ; you even proposed to stay for a month ; are you really so hard-pressed for time that you cannot afford to stay even for a few seconds ? **All is one**—it does not matter whether you stay or leave ; it makes no difference.

50. **Quarrel**—contend ; argue.

51. **Right himself with quarrelling**—decide the issue and set right the Wrong done to him by a conflict with swords.

52. **Some of us**—some of the prince's party, more specially Claudio. Delius points out that Don Pedro uses the word 'quarrel' in the sense of a 'wordy wrangle', and Antonio in that of a 'conflict with swords'. **Would lie low**—would be humbled.

53. **Dissembler**—hypocrite ; 'properly one who pretends not to be what he really is.'

55. **Beshrew my hand**—curse on my hand ; this is a petty form of curse like the modern 'confound'.

56. **If it should give**—for having given, (if it really has done so), *i.e.*, some sort of fear.

57. **My hand**—if I touched my sword, it was purely an unconscious or mechanical action on my part, natural to a soldier.

58. **Tush**—an interjection of contempt and annoyance. **Fleer**—grin ; sneer.

59. **Dotard**—a weak old man ; an old fool.

60. **As under privilege of age, to brag**—as though my age gave me the privilege of dragging.

62. **To thy head**—boldly to your face I say it.

64. **To lay my reverence by**—to forget, as a reverend old man, I have a right to be treated with dignity and respect.

65. **Bruise of many days**—broken as I am by many days—the result of so much suffuring in body and mind.

66. **Trial of a man**—'the hand to hand combat in which men engage ; possibly with a sneer at Claudio's manhood'. Leonato, though old, does not care anything for his manhood.

67. **Belied**—slandered.

69. **She lies buried**—Leonato brings to their notice the death of Hero.

70. **Where never scandal slept**—'where none of them were ever laid to rest with a reputation.'

71. **Framed**—devised.

75. **His nice fence**—in spite of his skill in fencing and his continuing in active practice, in contrast to myself who have so long laid my arms by.

76. **His May of youth, and bloom of lustihood**—the spring time of his youth and his freshness of vigour. **Lustihood**—manhood.

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77. **I will not have to do with you**—I refuse to have anything to do with you in the way of fighting ; *to do*—dealing.

78. **Daff me**—put me off.

80. **Men indeed**—not boys like himself.

82. **Win me and wear me**—proverbial (the laughs that wins) ; originally='win me and have me or enjoy me'—(Schmidt). **Answer**—*i.e.*, in combat : accept my challenge.

84. **I 'll whip you from.....fence**—I 'll beat you out of your boasted skill in fencing. **Foining**—"is a term in fencing and means thrusting."—(Douce).

87. **Content yourself**—do not give way to further passion but restrain your anger.

89. **A man indeed**—one who is indeed a man ; one worthy of the name.

91. **Jacks**—"a common term of contempt and reproach; fellow-knave ; rogue."—(Dyce). **Milksop**—an effeminate fellow under petticoat government ; an unmanly man.

87-91. **God knows, I loved my niece.....milksop**—"after Leonato has challenged Claudio to a single combat, Antonio also does the same stating that his niece died of slander against her character by villains who have not got the courage, and who are as unwilling to encounter him as he is to take a serpent by the tongue. He calls Claudio and Don Pedro 'boys, apes, braggarts, jacks, milksops'."

92. **Hold you content**—calm yourself.

93. **The utmost scruple**—the last particle. 'Scruple is the smallest measure of weight.

94. **Scambling**— scrambling. **Out-facing**— prepared to meet any matter with shameless face. **Fashion-mong'ring**—foppish.

95. **Cog**—cheat. **Flout**—mock. **Deprave**—villify.

96. **Anticly**—like antics ; like buffoons. In Quarto and Folio, it is spelt 'antiquely'. **Show outward hideousness**—assume the most warlike appearance.

97-98. **And speak off half a.....if they durst**—'and glibly utter a string of threats as to how they could punish their enemies, if only they had the courage to do so.'

102. **We will not wake your patience**—we will not do anything to disturb your patience. **Wake**—provoke.

103. **My heart is sorry**—I am heartily sorry.

105. **Verry full of proof**—fully proved.

107. **I will be heard**—I am determined to be heard, if not now, at all events sooner or later.

108. **And shall**—and you shall.

113. **You are almost come to part almost a fray**—you have come just in time to interfere with what was almost a fight. **Almost**

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a fray—said by Don Podro in a contemptuous sense consistent with the tone adopted by him and Claudio.

114. **Had like**—were likely.

117. **I doubt**—I fancy.

119. **False quarrel**—unjust quarrel.

122. **High-proof melancholy**—melancholy in the highest degree.

122-23. **Would fain have beaten away**—would gladly have it driven away.

123. **Wilt thou use thy wit ?** *i.e.*, will you make use of your wit to drive away our sadness.

126-27. **Have been beside their wit**—out of their wits ; mad.

127. **I will bid thee draw' etc.**—"a pun (equivoque) upon different sense of the word, *viz.*, to draw the sword for fighting, and to draw the bow across the string of the fiddle, or musical instruments from their cases. Douce thinks there may be an allusion to the itinerant 'sword-dancers', who were looked upon as little better than vagabonds."—(D.)

131-32. **Care kill'd a cat**—a proverbial expression. *Cf.* the proverb 'a cat has nine lives'.

132. **Mettle**—spirits.

133. **In the career**—in full tilt : boldly, if you will set your wit in rest, like a lance, for a charge.

135-36. **Nay then, give him another.....cross**—that is, give him some other subject to talk about ; in the last one he did not shine ; a metaphor from 'tilting', at which it was reckoned disgraceful for the tilter to break his spear across the body of his opponent, instead of breaking it in a direct line.—(Dyce).

137. **By this light**—a form of oath.

139. **To turn his girdle**—according to some the metaphor is from a practice in wrestling when the buckle of the belt was turned behind in order to give the adversary a fairer grasp at the belt and to do so was regarded as a challenge. According to others, the sword was formerly worn much at the back and to bring it within reach, the buckle of the belt had to be turned behind.

141. **God bless me from a challenge**—God save me from a challenge, said tauntingly.

142-43. **I will make it good etc.**—I will prove my assertion in combat in any way prefer giving you choice of weapon, place and time.

144. **Do me right**—give me the satisfaction I demand or I will publicly proclaim you a coward.

145. **Her death shall fall heavy on you**—you shall pay dearly for her death.

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146. **Let me hear from you**—let me know through some friend of yours all about the duel.

147. **So I may have**—provided I may have.

149-50. **He hath bid me.....capon**—yes, says Claudio in answer to the prince, he has invited me to a feast in which the dishes I shall have to carve are a calf's head and a capon, two terms of ridicule which he applies to Benedick. *Capon*=cap on, *i.e.*, with a coxcomb ; used as a term of contempt. **Capon**—chicken.

150. **Curiously**—skilfully.

151. **Naught**—good for nothing. **Say my knife's naught**—you may sav that my knife (my sword) is good for nothing in my hands. **A woodcock**—proverbial for a simplet on, because the bird was supposed to have no brain, or perhaps from its being easily caught in nets.

152. **Ambles well**—the easy gait to which ladies' horses especially were trained.

153. **Praised**—appraised ; valued.

154. **Fine**—small.

156. **Just**—true.

156-57. **It hurts nobody**—it is too blunt to hurt any one.

158. **A wise gentleman**—a wiseacre. **He hath the tongues**—he knows foreign languages and is a good linguist.

160. **Forswore**—contradicted.

162. **Trans-shape**—distort ; misrepresent.

163. **Properst**—most handsome.

164-65. **For the which she wept.....not**—for which fact etc. As in Don Pedro's next speech, the former half of the sentence is contradictory of the other.

169-70. **God saw him when he was hid in the garden**—according to Rolfe, the reference here is to *Genesis*, and Claudio perhaps wants to convey that while they were conversing about the love of Beatrice and Benedick, they knew that Benedick was overhearing them, as God saw Adam when he was trying to hide himself from His sight.

171-72. **But when shall we set.....head** ?—but when shall we see Benedick married and made a cuckold ?

173. **Text**—inscription ; writing.

176. **Gossip-like humour**—talkative wit.

176-77. **You break jests as braggarts do etc.**—as harmlessly as boastful fellows break their sword and pretend they did it in some hard-fought combat. *Cf.* the proverb **'Hard words break no bones'**.

178. **Courtesies**—courteous behaviour.

178-79. **I must discontinue your company**—I am obliged to quit your company ; no longer to be one of your followers.

181. **My lord Lack-beard**—a hit at the callow, unbearded youth (Claudio), wanting in ripe experience of old age.

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183. **He is in earnest**—*i.e.*, he is not in jest, he is serious.

187. **Most sincerely**—in all seriousness.

188-89. **What a pretty thing.....wit**—what an inconsistent fool is man, when he covers his body with clothes and at the same time divests himself of understanding."—(Steevens).

190-91. **He is then a giant to an ape.....man**—in appearance he is as a giant compared to an ape, but an ape is a learned being compared to such a man.

191. **A doctor**—a man of learning.

192. **Soft you**—gently. **Let me be**—let me alone ; leave me to myself (metaphorically) **Pluck up**—rouse thyself and be prepared for serious consequences. Perhaps Shakespeare meant 'rouse up my spirits to serious consequences' when he used the expression 'let me pluck up my heart'.

195. **Weight more reason**—this is how Dogberry moralizes. It is dangerous to meddle with his language as suggested by Walker who would transpose *weigh* and *more*. Ritson suggests a pun on 'reasons' and 'raisins' (words pronounced alike).

196. **Cursing hypocrite**—accursed slanderer. **Once**—for the nonce. **You must be looked to**—you must be dealt with.

199. **Hearken after their offence**—inquire into their offence ; pay heed to their crime.

201. **Committed**—perpetrated.

202. **Secondarily**—a blunder for 'secondly'.

203. **Slanders**—a blunder for 'slander'. **Belied**—defamed.

204. **Verified**—testified.

206. **Frist I ask thee etc.**—the prince is imitating Dogberry's classification of heads.

209. **Division**—arrangement of the subject.

210. **One meaning well-suited**—"that is, one meaning is put into many different ways ; the prince having asked the same question in four modes of speech."—(Johnson).

212. **Bound to your answer**—compelled to answer before a court of justice.

213. **Cunning**—clever ; knowing.

214. **Go no further to mine etc.**—let me proceed to my answer at once ; let me speak out with any circumlocution or attempt at defence.

216. **Your wisdoms**—you in your wisdom, wise as you are.

217. **Shallow fools**—stupid watchmen. **Brought to light**—exposed.

219. **Incensed**—incited.

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221-22. **When you should marry her**—at the time when you ought to have married her.

223. **Seal with my death**—confirm by my death rather than utter anything much to my disgrace by word of mouth.

224. **Upon**—in consequence of.

227-28. **Like iron through your blood**—like a sword thrust in your body.

231. **Practice**—performance; 'execution' rather than 'plotting'.

232. **Composed**—made up of.

235. **Rare semblance**—rare beauty in which I first loved it.

236. **Plaintiffs**—blunder for defendants or culprits.

237. **Reformed**—*i.e.*, informed.

238. **Specify**—*i.e.*, testify.

239. **I am an ass**—I have been called so.

242. **Eyes**—indicative of character.

249. **Honourable men**—said with great scorn ; ironical for 'dishonourable villains' (*i.e.*, Don Pedro and Claudio).

253. **If you bethink you of it**—this is said sarcastically to mean you will have to admit this when you come to think over the matter.

254. **Patience**—forgiveness.

256. **Impose me to**—put me to penance—punishment. **Invention**—imagination.

258. **But in mistaking**—except through some mistake.

260. **Heavy weight**—severe punishment.

264. **Possess**—inform ; acquaint.

266. **Labour aught**—produce anything by labour. **Sad invention**—elegy (poetic skill, imagination, etc.) as a kind of epitaph to be pinned so the hearse of the dead girl (Hero).

N. B. "It is the custom among the Catholics to attach to some column, or elsewhere, near the tomb of the dead, and especially of dead celebrities, funeral inscriptions of paper."

277. **And dispose** —and do you dispose of Claudio for the rest of his life ; I leave my future in your hands.

282. **Pack'd**—confederated ; implicated.

285. **Just**—honest.

286. **In any thing that I do know by her**—so far as I know any thing about her. **By her**—about her.

N. B. Borachio is only a second rate villain. When Leonato thinks Margaret to be an accomplice in the vile plot of Borachio and Don John, Borachio hastens to exonerate the innocent Margaret from complicity in the plot. This reveals the softer side of Borachio's character.

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287-88. **Under white and black**—a blunder for 'in black and white'; *i.e.*, in writing.

288. **Plaintiff**—a blunder for 'culprit'.

290. **One Deformed ; they say, etc.**—Dogberry in his confession says that he heard the villains talk about another man, *viz.*, the deformed thief with his gentleman's love-lock, which is so much in the fashion with lewd, effeminate, ruffianly persons, who ought to be arrested. The 'key in the ears' of the deformed thief seems to be a satire on the fashion of wearing roses in the ears. *Love-locks* refer to the custom of wearing a long lock of hair which was generally tied with ribbon and worn under the left ear, and worn by men in the reigns of Elizabeth and James I.

292. **Borrows money in God's name**—extracts money out of people like a professional beggar by the use of pious words. This alludes to the 17th verse of the XIX chapter of *Proverbs* : 'He that giveth to the poor, lendeth to the Lord."—(Steevens). **The which he hath used so long**—hath so long made a practice of doing.

298. **I praise God for you**—I thank God for creating men like you.

300. **God save the foundation**—"though this was the customary phrase employed by those who receive alms at the gates of religious houses. Steevens thinks that in the present instance Dogberry may have intended to say 'God save the founder.'"—(D.)

301. **I discharge thee of thy prisoner**—'that is, I take upon myself all further responsibility regarding the prisoner ; your duty in the matter is at an end.' Henceforth I take charge of him.

303. **Arrant**—notorious.

305. **God restore you to health**—Dogberry means to say 'God keep you in good health.'

306-07. **Give you leave**—I humbly beg leave.

308. **God prohibit it**—*i.e.*, God grant it.

310. **We look for**—we expect.

312. **How her acquaintance grew with this lewd fellow**—how she came to be acquainted with this base fellow. **Lewd**—base.

Act V : Scene II

Summary

Benedick meets Margaret, who is in her usual hilarious mood, blissfully ignorant of the mischief she has done against her own mistress. The former requests the latter if she can help him to speak with Beatrice. She replies that she can arrange a meeting between them, provided that he writes a sonnet in praise of her (Margaret's) beauty. Benedick confesses himself to be a poor rhymer, though he knows he is in love and agrees to comply with her request in spite of his shortcoming. When Beatrice enters,

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there is a quick exchange of witty words between the two lovers, now left alone, though there is no attempt to overcome each other this time. When they are thus talking, Ursula, comes to tell Beatrice that Hero's innocence has been established and that the culprit Don John, who had deceived Claudio and the prince, is fled and gone. The two lovers now hurry to Leonato's house to know further details about this welcome news.

Dramatic Importance

This scene, which does not advance the action and is not necessary from the point of view of the development of the plot, is designed to show the progress of the wooing of the two lovers. "The lovers are as witty as ever, but now they employ wit in playing up each other down." This love-scene is designed to relieve the tragic gloom in which the play had temporarily fallen.

NOTES

1-2. **Deserve well of my hands.....Beatrice**—place me under a debt of obligation to you by helping me to speak with Beatrice.

5. **In so high a style**—in so devoted a manner. Note the pun on 'style' and 'Stile'. There is a quibble upon 'come over' and 'comely' (fair).

6. **Come over**—excel.

7. **Come over me**—marry me.

8. **Keep below stairs**—remain a servant, *i.e.*, remain in the servant's room and not in the bridal chamber, *i.e.*, never get married.

7-8. **Shall I always keep below stairs**—keep in the servants' room and never get married.—(Rolfe.)

10. **It catches**—it (*i. e.*, your wit) seizes the point as swiftly as a greyhound seizes a hare.

11-12. **And yours as blunt as.....hurt not**—just as the sword used in fencing has a dull edge, so is your wit. **Foils**—blunt-edged sword which hurts nobody.

14-15. **I give thee the bucklers**—I confess myself beaten; I drop my shield.

16. **We have bucklers of your own**—*i.e.*, we can defend ourselves, what we need is weapons of offence : give us weapons of offence for our use. But as regards weapons of defence, we know how to defend ourselves. We of the race of womankind know how to defend ourselves.

18. **Pikes**—central pikes, screwed into the bluckler or shield. "The circular bucklers of the sixteenth century, now more commonly, called 'targets' had frequently a central spike or pike, usually affixed by a screw. It was probably found convenient to detach this pike occasionally ; for instance in cleaning the buckler etc. **Vice**—is the Franch *viz.*, 'a screw'.—(Rolfe).

22. **The God of love etc.**—The was the beginning of an old

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song by William Elderton, a puritanical parody of which by one W. Birch under the title of 'The Complaint of a Sinner,' etc... ...is still extant,"—(Riston).

26-27. **Leander the good swimmer**—the reference is to the tale of Hero and Leander, the two lovers. Leander used to swim across the Hellespont every night to visit Hero, who drowned herself in the sea on the night Leander was drowned.

27. **Of pandars**—the go-between in the love-affair of Troilus and Chryseis (Cressida). The plandar, *i.e.*, the go-between employed by Troilus was Cressida's uncle Pandarus. Hence the phrase 'pandar to one's vices' is to act as an agent to them.

28. **Quondam**—former. **Carpet-mongers**—carpet knights, *i.e.*, effeminate persons, who were dubbed at court by mere favour—not on the field of battle for their military exploits.—(Dyce).

28-29. **Whose names yet run.....blank verse**—who are still celebrated in many a heroic poem. Benedick says that though unable to express his love in rhyme, he is more in love than all those lovers whose names are celebrated in heroic poems.

30-31. **Turned over and over as.....love**—never so completely overcome by love as I am with the notion of a body rolling over and over again in the dust, mire, etc.

32. **Innocent**—foolish.

33. **Hard**—constrained.

33-34. **A babbling rhyme**—a senseless rhyme.

34. **Ominous**—inauspicious.

34-35. **Under a rhyming planet**—under the influence of the planet which endows a person with poetic inspiration.

35. **In festival terms**—'holiday terms'.

36. **Wouldst thou come.....thee ?**—does your coming now show that you are ready to do so whenever I might call you.

37. **And depart when you bid me**—that is, I should be quite as ready to leave you as to come to you.

39. **'Then' is spoken**—now that you have spoken the word 'then' I must leave you.

40. **That I came**—what I came for.

42. **Thereupon**—as a consequence which does not follow upon the premises.

45. **Noisome**—harmful ; annoying.

47. **His**—its.

49. **Undergoes**—bears ; lying under my challenge ; has received the challenge to a duel to which he (Claudio) has not replied as yet.

50. **Subscribe him**—proclaim ; declare him in writing.

53-54. **Which maintained so politic etc.**—which showed such statecraft in preserving a constitution of unmixed evil that no good

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quality could find place among them ; allusion to the jealousy of admitting foreigners to the privilege of citizenship.—(D.) "So well organised society of evil."—(Hudson).

56. **Suffer**—feel.

57. **Epithet**— expression.

59. **In spite of**—in hatred or ill-will towards.

63. **It appears not in this confession**—wisdom is not apparent in this confession of your love.

65. **Instance**—proverbial saying. **Lived**—was pertinent ; was true.

66. **Good neighbours**—*i.e.*, "when men were not envious, but everyone gave another his due."—(Warbutron).

67. **In monument**—in memorial, that which ensures remembrance.

66-68. **If a man do not erect in.....the widow weeps**—this is Benedick's reply to Beatrice's statement (a wise man does not praise himself). In olden times wise men used to be praised by their neighbours and had no need to praise themselves. But in this age unless a man erects his own tomb, he is apt to be gorgotten directly after his death.

66. **The widow weeps**—The allusion here relates to the story of Arthur Hugh Clough, in which a woman was asked by a man, who was leading her out of the church after the funeral of her husband, to marry him, and the woman replied, he was too late with the offer, as she made a promise to the man who had led her in, but that she would keep him, in mind on the next occasion. What Benedick wants to convey here is that lamentation was not over and the bell started clapping by which an unexpected turn is made to ring longer than the widow weeps.

70. **Question**—that is the question. **Clamour**—noisy sorrowing ; of the funeral bell.

71. **Rheum**—tears.

72. **Don Worm**—the worm of conscience. 'Conscience was formerly represented under the symbol of a worm.'

74. **How doth**—how is.

80. **Mend**—get better ; improve in character.

82-83 **Yonder's old coil**—there is a terrible business, *i. e.*, trouble.

84. **Abused**—deceived.

86. **Presently**—atonce ; immediately.

89. **And moreover I will go with etc.**—a humorous anti-climax (bathos) after his professions of devotion—a descent from the sublime to the ridiculous.

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ACT V: SCENE III

Summary

By way of explanation for the wrong done to Hero, Claudio was to hang an epitaph on her supposed tomb that very night and to marry Leonato's neice ("almost the copy of his child that is dead") the next morning. Accordingly Claudio goes to the family vault of the church along with Don Pedro and a few torch-bearers that night. There Claudio hangs a penetential epitaph on Hero's supposed tomb, written out on a scroll. This scroll mentions specifically how Hero was killed by slander and how she lives in death with glorious fame. After Claudio has hung with propper funeral pomp the perscribed elegy upon Hero's cenotaph and sung a song in mourning for the virgin knight he expresses his determination to visit her tomb every year to do penance. Then they proceed to the house of Leonato as the dawn draws near, to keep the promise in order to be married to a woman he has never seen.

Dramatic Importance

This scene is a fulfilment of the injunction of Leonato on Claudio to marry his niece and to hang a penetential epitaph on the supposed tomb of hero in atonement of the injury done to her. The epitaph, the song, sung by Claudio and his companions in mourning for the virgin knight and the dialogue—all add dignity to the scene, befitting the time, place and occassion. Everything spectacular about the church rituals and ceremony, which accords well with the theatricality of the penance as of the repudiation.

NOTES

1. **Monument**—family vault or tomb.

3. **Done to death**—murdered ; killed.

5. **Guerdon**—reward ; recompense.

5-8. **Death in guerdon of her wrongs.....glorious fame**—she lives in death with the glorious and undying fame,—a death brought about by slanderous tongues.

N. B. It does not seem to occur to Claudio while reading the lines out of the scroll that of all the slanderous tongues that killed Hero, his was the one of the unkindest. He is nothing if not theatrical. He fulfils the functions of sorrow and repentance in the night and the very next morning he is ready to be married to a woman whom he has never seen.

10. **Dumb**—dead.

11. **Music**—musicians.

12. **Goddess of the night**—Diana. "Diana's knight or *virgin knight* was the common poetical appellanation of virgins in Shakespeare's time"—(D.) Virgins were poetically called 'virgin knights'.

16-21. **Midnight assist our moon.....heavily**—the repentant lover (Claudio) having been enjoined upon by Leonato to hang an

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epitaph on the supposed tomb of Hero, reads the text before hanging it on the tomb. It states how Hero was killed by slanderous tongues and how those who were instrumental in killing her, are now repentant and full of remorse. **Heavily**—sorrowfully.

N.B. In regard to this passage Halliwell says : "The slayers of the virgin knight are perfroming a solemn requiem on the body of Hero and they invoke Midnight and the Shades of the dead to assist, until, *her* death be *uttered*, that is proclaimed, published sorrowfully. As to 'graves yawn' etc., 'I know not', says Walker, 'why we should consider them as anything more than an invocation—after the usual manner of funeral dirges in that age, in which mourners of some description or other are summoned to the funeral—a call, I say, upon the surrounding dead to come forth from their graves as auditors or sharers in the solemn lamentation'."

Other editors follow the folio in reading *heavenly* '*hevenly*', which, according to Grant White, means that death is to be uttered (*i. e.*, expelled ; outered) by the power of heaven.—(D.) The reading *heavily* (=sorrowfully) is to be preferred for obvious reasons. *Cf. Hamlet.* (II, ii) : "And indeed it goes on heavily with my disposition." Also *Sonnet*, XXX, 10 : "And *heavily* from woe to tell o'er."

The word "uttered" (used in the sense of 'commemorated', 'published' or proclaimed') appropriately modifies 'heavily.'

25. **The wolves have preyed**—*i. e.*, have now ceased to prey, the night being over. It means treason has done its worst on Hero. **The gentle day**—look, how gentle day chequers the sleepy eastern sky with spots of grey before the sun rises. *Cf. Romeo and Juliet*, II. ii—

"The grey-eyed moon smiles on the frowning night,
Chequering the eastern clouds with streaks of light.

26. **Phoebus**—the sun-god Apollo in Greek mythology.

27. **Dapples**—spots : chequers with streaks of light. **Drawsy east**—the estern sky still reposing in the embrace of sleep.

28. **Thanks to you all, and leave us**—I offer my thanks to you all and request you to leave us.

30. **Weeds**—garments.

32. **Hymen**—Greek god of marriage. **Speed's**—this is a contraction for "speed us". This is how he comments : "Claudio' could not know, without being a prophet, that his new proposed match should have any luckier event than that designed with Hero; certainly, therefore, should be a wish."

33. **Than this for whom we.....this woe**—than this on account of which we have just paid these mournful rites and solemn lamentation.

Act V : Scene IV

Summary

The scene opens in a room where the entire household of **Leonato** including Hero, Beatrice and the waiting-women is present

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with the Friar. The men folk express great relief at the happy turn of events arising out of the establishment of the innocence of Hero. As the time for the arrival of Claudio and the prince is drawing near, Leonato asks the ladies to withdraw into a chamber and to come back masked when sent for.

Benedick entreats the friar 'to bind me or undo me' telling Leonato at the same time that Beatrice regards him favourably. He requests the friar to unite him in marriage with Beatrice at the time of the marriage of Claudio with Hero. Leonato, who is glad that the plan to bring about this mutual regard for the two lovers (Benedick and Beatrice) has at last borne fruit, is only too glad to promise Benedick the help he seeks.

On the arrival of Claudio with the prince, Leonato presents to him his promised bride in mask. He (Claudio) says to the masked lady, "Give me your hand, before this holy friar ; I am your husband, if you will marry me." When the unknown lady in mask replies, "And, when I lived I was your other wife," as she takes off her mask. Claudio is struck by the resemblance of his new bride to Hero. Don Pedro is equally amazed and exclaims, "Is not this Hero—Hero that was dead ?" To this question Leonato replies, "She died, my lord, but while her slander lived." The friar offers to explain to them the whole mystery about a second Hero after the holy rites of marriage are solemnised.

In the meantime, Benedick proceeds to get the consent of Beatrice to their marriage, Leonato's reference to the plan to make them fall in love with each other has been unintelligible to Benedick. When both the lovers find that they have been victims of a practical joke played upon them by Don Pedro and his friends, they are not at all sorry as they are so far gone in love as to have written sonnets addressed to one another. They are genuinely in love with one another and Beatrice allows herself to be kissed by Benedick to ratify their mutual love. The whole party now have a dance before the happy marriages are solemnised. Just then news is brought that Don John has been captured and brought back to Messina. But the merry party go ahead with their music and dance leaving the question of punishing Don John to the next day.

Dramatic Importance

This is the last scene of the play which form the denouement of the untying of the knot, arising out of the conflict, crisis, resolution and the catastrophe : "Don John has fled ; Claudio has done penance; bygones are bygones and gaiety resumes her sway. Only in Hero's accounts is there any trace of the ordeal through which she has passed." The whirligig of Time will take up the question of "brave punishments" to be bevised for him on the morrow, because the prevailing spirit of mirth and festivity—of recognition and reconciliation is not to be disturbed for the 'romantic comedy,' ending in happiness —the goal of human life.

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NOTES

3. **Upon**—in consequence of. **Debated**—spoken about; discussed.

4. **In some fault**—somewhat to blame.

6. **In the true course of all the question**—as has been proved, has turned out, now that the whole matter has been thoroughly sifted and enquired into. **Question**—investigation.

7. **Sorts**—turns out.

8. **Being else by faith enforced**—who should otherwise be compelled by the oath or pledge I took to call Claudio to account for the wrong done by Hero by slandering her character in the church. **Enforced**—compelled.

9. **A reckoning**—an account.

14. **Office**—duty.

15. **Must be father**—must give her away in marriage to Claudio, playing the part of father to her.

17. **Confirm'd countenance**—steady face without betraying the plot.

20. **To bind me or undo me**—unite me in marriage to her or in the alternative ruin me.

23. **That eye my daughter lent her**—she would not have looked upon you so favourably if it had not been for what my daughter told her about your being so deeply in love with her. The reference is to the plot carried out by Hero, the daughter of Leonato. Both Benedick and Beatrice will come to understand at a later stage in this scene that they had been victims of a practical joke played upon them by Don Pedro and his associates.

24. **Requite**—repay.

25. **The sight whereof I think etc.**—you owe it to what you overheard us say 'in the pleached valley', that you in return now look upon her with that 'eye of love'.

27. **Enigmetical**—puzzing.

28. **But, for my will, is etc.**—but as regards my will (desire) that is, that yours may go with mine and Beatrice's, which is that we may this day be united, etc.

29. **May stand**—may harmonise. **Conjoined**—united.

30. **State**—Johnson would alter 'State' into 'estate' in order to give a more harmonious line than by taking marriage as a trisyllable as Steevens does.

32. **My heart is with your liking**—my heart goes out to you in your desire to marry Beatrice.

36. **Attend you**—are here awaiting you.

37. **To marry with**—to be joined in marriage with.

38. **I'll hold my mind**—stick to my determination. **An Ethiope**—a native of Ethiopia, *i.e.*, a dark-skinned woman.

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41. **A February face**—a wintry face.

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43. **Savage bull**—perhaps Benedick thinks of his marriage and consequently of his being made a cuckold by his wife. It may be an allusion to the mythological story. Jupiter changed himself into a bull to carry off Europa.

44. **Tush**—pshaw (an interjection expressive of contempt). **Tip thy horns with gold**—surmount your horns with gold.

45. **All Europa**—"all our Europe". This is the reading suggested by Steevens. Some editors read "all Europe" instead of "all Europa." When Don Pedro asks, "But when shall we set the savage bull's horns on the sensible Benedick's head ?"—he means, "When shall we see Benedick married to Beatrice and made a cuckold." The allusion to Europa is about Jupiter, who was enamoured of the beauty of Europa, the daughter of Phoenix, and carried her off to Crete where three children were born to her. Tennyson narrates this story in his *Palace of Art* :

> "And sweet Europa's mantle blew unclasped
> From off her shoulder backward borne ;
> From one hand dropped a crocus, one hand grasped
> The mild bull's golden horn."

47. **Would play**—decided to play.

48-51. **Bull Jove, sir, had an amiable.....his bleat**—finding Benedick in the condition of a lover, both Claudio and Don Pedro having a little bantering talk with him. Benedick is angry at this remark. His sense of honour is hurt when Claudio transfers his love from Hero to a strange girl whom he has so far not seen, at the bidding of Leonato in order to expiate the wrong done by him to Hero. Hence this rather offensive reply of Benedick.

52. **Other reckonings**—other matters which have to be reckoned with and settled.

53. **I must seize upon**—I am to take.

N. B. How slight and unworthy has been the love of Claudio is seen in the extreme levity of his behaviour immediately after the reparation he does for the wrong he has done to Hero by hanging up his rhymed epitaph on her grave. He has now clean forgotten all about it and is ready to marry a strange girl whom he has not seen yet.

60. **Other**—former.

61. **Certainer**—more certain.

63. **Defiled**—defamed, that is, by slandering her character.

N. B. Collier's reading 'belied' is not an improvement.

67. **Qualify**—moderate.

69. **Largely**—in full.

70. **Let wonder seem familiar**—let what looks so strange appear to be of ordinary occurrence.

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72. **Soft and fair**—gently.

81. **Almost sick**—'almost ill for your great love for me' : to which Beatrice replies that she had been told he was not only sick but almost 'dead' from love for her.—(D.)

83. **'T is no such matter**—nothing of the kind.

84. **Friendly recompence**—'such a return as one friend might make to another.'

88. **Halting sonnet**—halting in metre. (A love poem composed by Benedick in honour of Beatrice). **Pure brain**—entirely his own, written without anyone's assistance.

90. **Writ**—written.

91. **Affection unto**—love for.

N. B. Both Benedick and Beatrice now find that they had been victims of a practical joke played upon them by Don Pedro and his associates, but they are so far gone in love as to have written sonnets addressed to each other. So they can no longer retrace their steps back, as they are now genuinely in love with one another. The only difference between the two lovers is that Benedick is full of vanity or self-love which still compels him to take to the weapon of his wit, while Beatrice whose love is stronger than her self-love, also takes recourse to her wit to pretend not to care for him. It is this vanity which temporarily keeps them apart till they capitulate with honour.

92. **Hands**—handwriting against our hearts ; witness against 'our hearts.'

92. **I would not**—I do not wish.

97. **In a consumption**—the love disease which is consuming your vital powers everyday.

100-01. **Wit crackers**—professional wits ; jesters.

101. **Cannot flout me out of humour**—could not dissuade me from my purpose or inclination. **Flout**—jeer. **Humour**—purpose.

102-04. **If a man will be beaten.....about him**—If a man is going to allow himself to be beaten with brains, he will do well not to put on handsome dress, lest it should be spoilt. Of course 'beaten with brains' metaphorically means flouted out of his purpose.—(D.)

107. **Giddy**—fickle ; changeable.

108. **I did think**—it was my intention etc. **In that**—since.

109. **Live unbruised**—live on without thy bruises which I meant to give you.

111. **Cudgelled**—beaten. **Single life**—thy own life.

112. **Double dealer**—deceiver.

113. **Look exceeding narrowly to thee**—watch you carefully.

119. **Cudgelled thee out of thy single life.....narrowly to thee**—When the two wits are finally reconciled, Benedick abjures his

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bachelorhood and decides to marry Beatrice, Claudio suggests he is sure to be unfaithful and prove himself to be a double-dealer, if Hero does not choose to watch over him.

119-20. **There is no staff more.....tipped with horn**—"an allusion to the walking-sticks used by elderly people, which were often tipped with a cross-piece of horn or sometime amber. They seem to have been imitated from the 'crutched' sticks or potences, as they were called, used by friars, and by them borrowed from the celebrated *tan* (=stick in the shape of the Greek letter 'T') of Saint Anthony."—(Douce, quoted by Dyce.) The word 'horn' has the double sense of 'a cuckold's horn.'

120. **With**—by.

121. **Ta'en**—arrested.

124. **Brave**—fine ; excellent.

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EXPLANATIONS OF IMPORTANT PASSAGES

(*1*) *He hath.....you how* (*I, i, 11-14*).

This is the speech of the Messenger in Act I, Scene i, in Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing*. The Messenger has brought a letter of Don Pedro informing that he would arrive that night in Messina and that he has just been victorious in battle and very few gentlemen have been lost. Don Pedro has also included in his letter some remarks about a young Florentine called Claudio. Through this letter Leonato, the Governor of Messina, learns that Don Pedro has bestowed much praise and honour on Claudio.

The Messenger affirms that Claudio's exploits fully deserve to be honoured. In the letter Don Pedro rightly remembers his feats. The Messenger means to say that Claudio's exploits in the suppression of the rebellion, fostered by the bastard John fully deserved to be honoured by Don Pedro who did full justice to the youngman's services by requiting them adequately. The Messenger further affirms that Claudio has shown his valour in the war in a way that could hardly be expected from a youth of his age. In other words, it may be said that a lamb had performed the exploits of a lion. The Messenger concludes by saying that Claudio has gone beyond expectation in deeds much farther than one must expect him to describe in words.

Through the words of the Messenger, Shakespeare presents Claudio as a young and brave man who eminently deserved all the honour. The figure of a lamb and the feats of a lion is an example of Lyly's Euphuism which was much in vogue in the age of Shakespeare.

(*2*) *He set up.....killing.* (*I, i, 32-37*).

These are the words spoken by Beatrice, Leonato's niece, in Act I, Scene i, of Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing*. When the Messenger comes to Leonato with the letter of Don Pedro, Beatrice asks the Messenger if 'Signior Mountanto' has also returned from the war. But the Messenger is puzzled as there was no soldier of that name. Hero, the daughter of Leonato clarifies that Beatrice means to ask about Benedick. Then the Messenger tells that he has returned and is in gay spirits.

Beatrice makes fun of Benedick. She says that when he was last in Messina, he advertised his merits in the field of love. In other words, he proclaimed himself to be a lady-killer and great lover. He

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defied Cupid, the god of love, to do his worst. Her uncle's fool accepted the challenge on behalf of Cupid asking him at the same time to shoot at crows with the cross-bow and bird-bolt for killing them for the purpose of the table. Beatrice, in fact, makes a jest at the Messenger's remark to the effect that Benedick has done good service in the wars. According to her, his valour consists in being a great eater. Beatrice wants to know how many people Benedick has killed in the war, because she had pledged to eat all his killings. But the implication of her words is that Benedick is such a coward that he will be able to kill none at all.

The remark of Beatrice for Benedick throws light on a previous love-affair between them. In fact, Shakespeare suggests that Beatrice is very strongly attracted to Benedick, and she certainly shows an extraordinary amount of interest in a man she supposedly does not like. Some critics think that Beatrice is referring to herself as a fool for having previously undertaken a battle of the sexes with the impervious Benedick, a battle from which she emerged somewhat wounded in heart and deeply in love with the young nobleman.

The expression 'to set up bills' was most commonly used (as here) of the posting of placards by public challengers.

(3) *It is.....all mortel.* (*I, i, 49-50*). (*Imp.*)

This speech of Beatrice has been taken from Act I, Scene i of Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing*. The Messenger has arrived with a letter of Don Pedro. In the letter, Pedro has appreciated the bravery of the young Florentine Claudio. The Messenger affirms that Claudio's exploits fully deserve to be honoured. Beatrice asks about Benedick of Padua. The Messenger tells that he has also returned. When the Messenger tells her that he has also fared well in the war, she retorts that Benedick is a very valient eater and has an excellent appetite. However, the Messenger says that Benedick is stuffed with all honourable virtues.

Retorting on the remark of the Messenger about Benedick, Beatrice uses the word 'stuff'd' in other sense. She says that Benedick is a man made up of stuffing like a doll, not a real man, but a man of straw—a mere image of man. Beatrice means to say that all men are subject to failings and the particular failing of Benedick is that he is a stuffed man. In other words, he is not a man of substance but a puppet—a man of straw. But as he is a mortal like the rest of the people, he has his own weaknesses as all mortals have. Therefore, Beatrice means to say that his stuffing is quite what the Messenger's eulogy implies.

This speech reveals that Beatrice is gifted with a very piercing, pungent and voluble wit—the natural flow of a happy nature. Shakespeare presents his characters in such a situation with a definite end in view. Here, in this play, it is clear that Beatrice is anxious about Benedick's safety in the wars and wants to be assured of it. So the skirmish she puts up with Benedick, the moment he enters on the scene, is only a mock-battle.

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(4) *Is it possible.....presence.* (*I, i, 101-103*).

This speech of Beatrice has been taken from the Act I Scene i, of Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing*. Beatrice and Benedick are at war of wit. When Don Pedro arrives at the house of Leonato, he says to Leonato that he has taken all the pains to entertain the guests. But Leonato says that he feels sorry and lovely when his guests like Don Pedro leave him. In the meantime, Don Pedro, when he comes to know that Beatrice is Leonato's daughter, praises her as being very much like her honourable father. But Benedick retorts that perhaps she would like to be her own self rather than exchange her young head for her father's old one.

Beatrice, being a quick-witted lady, asks Benedick to keep silence as nobody is attentive towards him. At this calling Beatrice ironically as 'Lady Disdain', he asks her if she is still alive, i.e., if she is still in a mood of mocking. Then Beatrice replies mockingly that surely nobody can help being a mocker so long as a ridiculous creature, like Benedick, is about. She tells further that if the most courteous person becomes desdainful, nobody is responsible for it except Benedick himself. So she gives a fitting reply to Benedick's use of the epithet 'Lady Disdain' used for her by saying that it is Benedick's mocking presence that makes even the most courteous persons disdainful.

(5) *Yea, and a case.....the song ?* (*I, i, 156-160*).

This speech of Benedick occurs in Act I, Scene i of Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing*. Beatrice and Benedick are at war of wit. Both indulge in a mock-battle of words. At the house of Leonato, Benedick mocks at Beatrice for her talkativeness. But when all except Benedick and Claudio leave the scene, Claudio asks Benedick about his opinion about Hero, the daughter of Leonato. Benedick simply says that he has not specially looked at her. However, Claudio goes on asking about Hero, which irritates him, for it seems to him that such questions are legitimate only when one is going to buy an object. When Benedick asks Claudio if he is going to buy Hero, Claudio asks if the world can purchase such a jewel.

Benedick says that the world can, of course, buy such a jewel as Hero but also a jewel-case to keep it inside. He, however, asks Claudio whether he is joking or speaking in all seriousness about the beauty of an ordinary woman. He asks him if he means to laugh at him (Benedick) by telling him that blind Cupid is a sharp-sighted hare-finder and that Vulcan, the clumsy blacksmith is a good carpenter. He means to ask Claudio as to how much seriously he should take his words. Is he merely a mocking knave or one who has really fallen in love with Hero ?

Vulcan is the divine blacksmith who had his workshop on Mount Etna, where he forged the thunderbolts for Jove. The clumsy blacksmith cannot by any stretch of imagination be a good carpenter; nor can blind Cupid be a good hare-finder.

There is a play on the word 'case' meaning a 'jewel-case' as well as 'dress'. The expression 'Flouting Jack' has been used in the sense of a jester, though it is a term of contempt.

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(6) *In faith.....Sundays.* (*I, i, 170-174*) (*Imp*).

These words have been taken from the speech of Benedick in Act I, Scene i of Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing*. Claudio praises Leonato's daughter Hero and asks Benedick about his opinion. But Benedick gets irritated, for it seems to him that such questions are legitimate only when one is going to buy an object. When Benedick asks if he is going to buy Hero, Claudio asks if the world can purchase such a jewel. However, Benedick asks him if he is joking or speaking in all seriousness about the beauty of Hero and his love for her.

Benedick tells Claudio that he does not find in Hero any charm that Claudio finds. Rather Beatrice is more charming. Except for her defect of being like a fury, she is admittedly more handsome than Hero. He, however, hopes that Claudio would not like to marry her, but Claudio says that he is not sure of not marrying her. At this Benedick asks if there is not a single man in the world who will avoid marriage and so escape the fear that his wife has cuckolded him. He again asks if he will not be able to see a bachelor of sixty years again. He warns Claudio that if he marries, he will lead a miserable life. His determination to marry will be seen in his sad and serious behaviour. He will have to make sighs on Sundays.

Sunday is perhaps the longest day for there is no work, nor any business. So it is the longest and the fullest day for a cuckold (a captive husband) to sigh. Benedick wants to convey that should Claudio be a husband, he must be a husband in the fullest sense.

'To wear his cap with suspicion' implies the faithlessness of one's wife. It was a common Elizabethan jest that a man whose wife had proved faithless, had 'horns' growing out of his forehead.

(7) *If I do.....Adam.* (*I, i, 221-223*) (*Imp.*)

These words are spoken by Benedick in Act I, Scene i of Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing*. When Benedick and Claudio are talking about love and marriage, Don Pedro arrives. Benedick informs him that Claudio is in love with 'Leonato's short daughter'. Hearing the views of Benedick on love and fair sex, Don Pedro calls him an obstinate heretic in the despite of beauty. Benedick entertains the idea that husbands have to be cuckolds, therefore, he proclaims that he would better remain a bachelor. He says that he would not like to suffer from the pangs of love. At this, Don Pedro says that if ever Benedick fell from this determination, he would become a subject of ridicule.

Benedick says that he is firm in his determination, and if ever he faltered, he would gladly embrace any ridicule. He says that he would subject himself to the cruellest torture and would not at all mind if the man who hits him with his arrows is publicly applauded as a famous archer and given the name of Adam Bell, the notorious outlaw.

Benedick refers to one of the barbarous sports of former times. The practice was to enclose a cat in a suspended coop of open bars,

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and shoot at it with arrows till the poor animal was killed. This sport was one of the popular sports in Elizabethan times.

Adam was one of the three noted outlaws, famous for their skill in archery, who figure in the spirited and picturesque ballad entitled, *Adam Bel, Clym of the Cleugh and William of Cloudesly.*

(8) *I had rather.....alter me.* (*I, iii, 23-31*).

This speech of Don John has been taken from Act I, Scene iii of Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing*. Don John enters a room in Leonato's house and is followed by his servant Conrade who is trying to cheer up his master. But Don John wishes to remain morose and sullen. He tells that he will be sad when he has cause and smile at no man's jests. Conrade tactfully states that Don John has recently stood out against his brother, Don Pedro, and now that he is back in his good graces should try to bring about some kind of preferment.

Don John makes no secret of the villainy of his nature when he confesses to his follower Conrade that even though reconciled with his brother he had rather be what his nature makes him, *i.e*, mean, envious, vicious. He would rather like to be disdained by everyone than get into favour of anybody. It suits his temper to be a noxious weed in the hedge rather than a rose shining in the graces of his brother, Don Pedro.

Don John further says that he would like to be a straightforward and plain-dealing person. People show perfect trust in him, by putting a muzzle on him like a dangerous dog. They give him perfect freedom by fettering him with a clog, like an animal, they are afraid, will run away. So, like a caged bird, he is determined not to sing to please them. The trust placed in him is like that reposed in a dangerous dog after putting a covering on its mouth to prevent it from biting or like a caged bird determined not to sing to please its captor, to show itself to be happy. Therefore, Don John finally says that he makes the fullest use of his discontent because he glories in it, and surliness is a part and parcel of his very nature.

(9) *He that.....into hell.* (*II, i, 29-34*) (*Imp*).

These words have been taken from the speech of Beatrice in Act II, Scene i of Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing*. Hero remarks that Don John is rather ill-tempered. Beatrice says that the perfect man would be the one who combined some of Don John's silence and a portion of Benedick's chattering. Then, if he had a good leg for dancing and money in his purse, he would be a better man to win a lady. But Leonato chides Beatrice by saying that she is too shrewish, to which Beatrice replies that God will not send her a husband because she is so 'curst'. Beatrice, exercising her wit, remarks that she thanks God every morning and evening for not sending her a husband. Anyway, she could ever endure a husband with a beard.

Responding to the witty remark of Leonato, Beatrice says that she would not like to marry a bearded man. In her opinion, a man who has a beard is more than a youth; and he who has no beard is

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less than a man. To her way of thinking, whoever is more than a youth is not for her, and she is not for anyone who is less than a man. Instead, she would like to remain unmarried. She would rather bind herself to a bear-keeper to by taking six-pence as a tip to lead his apes into hell. She is prepared to undergo this punishment than to take a husband in marriage.

It was believed that unmarried women were doomed to lead apes into hell. So Beatrice says that she would serve as an apprentice under a bear-keeper, who also generally kept apes and led them (apes) into hell.

(*10*) *No, but to.....is long.* (*II, i, 36-41*).

This speech of Beatrice occurs in Act II Scene i of Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing*. Beatrice and Leonato are talking about marriage and the type of a husband she would like to have. Beatrice says that she would like to remain unmarried, for she thinks that whoever is more than a youth is not for her, and she is not for anyone who is less than a man. Therefore, she would like to be apprenticed to a bear-keeper to lead his apes in hell.

When Leonato asks Beatrice if she would like to go to hell, she tells that her trip to hell must stop at the gate when the devil, with horns on his head like a cuckold, sends her to heaven because there is no room in hell for maids. And once she is in heaven, St. Peter will show her where the bachelors (of both sexes) stay and together will all be merry as the day is long there.

Beatrice means to convey indirectly that she would be sent to heaven by the devil of hell with the excuse that hell is a place for husbands and not for maids like Beatrice. One more interpretation has been accepted in this regard, that heaven is a place where there is neither marrying for giving on marriage. In either case one thing is certain that Beatrice has been identified with bachelordom of heaven.

St. Peter is known as the guardian of the gates of heaven, and keeps the golden key with him.

(*11*) *Not till..... .....kindred* (*II, i, 50-55*).

This speech of Beatrice occurs in Act II Scene i of Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing*. When Beatrice indulges in subtle and witty remarks about love and marriage, Antonio suggests Hero to be guided by her father. At this Beatrice remarks that it is Hero's duty to be ruled by her father Leonato, even marry the man he chooses. But Beatrice also tells Hero to be sure that the husband Leonato finds for her is at least handsome. Then Leonato says to Beatrice that he hopes to see her married one day.

Responding to the remark of Leonato, Beatrice says that she would marry a man who is made of some rarer stuff. She contends that men are only dust, and a woman would be grieved to be ruled by a piece of wilful and eccentric earth. She suggests that man, who is only a handful of dust, has erred and strayed from the way of faith and duty. She states that she is not going to marry. Besides, all the

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sons of Adam are her brothers. How can she commit a sin by marrying a brother ? In other words also, she cannot marry a man who has been made of clay like her.

In fact, the extravagance of her argument creates the impression that Beatrioc's aversion to marriage is more a matter of her witty attitude than a matter of principle. Her remarks seem to be an expression of her doubts about the marriage of convenience or a marriage simply for the sake of marriage.

(*12*) *For hear me,.....his grave.* (*II. i, 61-66*) (*Imp.*)

These words have been taken from the speech of Beatrice in Act II, Scene i of Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing*. During a witty chat about marriage, Beatrice tells that she would not like to marry, as all men are made of the clay like her. But Leonato says to his daughter Hero that if the Prince Don Pedro courts her with a view to marriage, she should accept his proposal. Beatrice, however, advises Hero that a proper limit or moderation in everything and that she should suppress her answer in dancing.

In continuation of her witty remarks, Beatrice goes on to expound the various stages of wooing and marriage. She advises Hero to exercise moderation and if Don Pedro be too insistent, then she should attend to the dance, and thus put off the answer ; for wooing, marriage and the follow up repentance are like three steps of dance. Wooing, like a highiand (Scottish) dance, is lively and hasty; wedding is full of dignity and repentance (cinque-pace), representing the last stage of married life, moves faster and faster till the grave is reached.

As the characters are ready for a dance-party, Beatrice speaks in the terminology of dance. She compares the swiftness and loveliness of the stage of wooing with the Scotch Jig, marriage is old-fashioned and repentance, the last stage of married life is compared with another dance Cinque-pace, having five steps. 'Faster and faster' denotes the acceleration of the movement of the dance towards the finale.

(*13*) *Why, he is.....boarded me.* (*II, i, 120-125*).

This speech of Beatrice occurs in Act II, Scene i of Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing*. As the dance begins, the revelers put on their masks. When Benedick in his masked dress takes mean advantage of his disguise by telling her that she is not only disdainful, but she also steals her good wit from the disreputable work 'Hundred Merry Tales'. Beatrice resents the imputation that she drew her wit from such a source and shrewdly suspects that only Benedick could have made such a statement.

Pretending that she does not know that she is dancing with Benedick, Beatrice retaliates by telling him that possibly her present partner has heard of a man called Benedick who is the 'Prince's jester *i.e.*, a shallow man of wit, a dull fool who specialises only in inventing false and extravagant slanders. He is good at bringing down the reputation of others by his slanders. Only those persons who are lax in morals keep his company. By his impious jests he only pleases

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villains. Beatrice goes on to say that Benedick, like the dull fool in the employ of the prince, at first pleases people by inventing false slanders, but the moment these slanders are brought against them, he makes them angry, so they laugh at him and beat him by turns. She finally says that she is sure he is among this company and wishes he had accosted her.

(*14*) *Friendship.....into blood.* (*II, i, 154-159*) (*Imp.*)

These words have been taken from the speech of Claudio in Act II, Scene i of Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing*. Don John remarks loudly, for Claudio to hear, that he thinks Don Pedro is in love with Hero and has taken Leonato aside to ask for her hand in marriage. Don John, pretending that he is talking to Benedick (as Claudio is wearing a mask), asks Claudio to convince Don Pedro not to marry Hero, who is below him in birth. Claudio asks Don John how he knows that Don Pedro loves Hero. Don John replies that his brother told him so. Borachio says that he also heard Don Pedro swear he would marry Hero tonight. The two liars then go off to partake of the banquet, leaving Claudio heart-broken.

Claudio, in a desperate soliloquy, now realises his foolishness. He laments his mistake in having employed a third party, *i.e*, Don Pedro, to negotiate in love. He, therefore, moralises on the inconstancy of friendship in matters of love, for in love at least no one can be trusted. Everyone should negotiate for himself, because beauty has the power to charm the best intentions of a friend into passionate love. Even the dearest of friends is apt to be bewitched by beauty forgetting the claims of friendship. In fact, before the bewitching influence of beauty, honour melts into a flood of passion. The greatest faith and trust one has for a friend would melt and give way to passion. Loyalty will thus be dissolved into sensual passion.

It may be noted that Claudio is a very credulous sort of lover. He distrusts the good faith of his friend and patron (Don Pedro) at the first blush of suspicion. Even after his doubts in this behalf are dispelled, he lends a willing ear to the same villain and allows himself to be persuaded that his fiancee is guilty of a disgraceful amour with Borachio.

(*15*) *I found him .....whipped.* (*II, i, 189-194*). (*Imp.*)

These words have been taken from the speech of Benedick in Act II Scene i of Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing*. Benedick takes the insulting remarks of Beatrice for him to his heart. He is upset because she said he was the prince's jester. He wonders if there may not appear to be some truth in the remark since he indeed has a merry soul. Finally he comes to the conclusion that it is Beatrice's shrewishness that makes her think her opinion of him is shared by everyone when he is musing like this, Don Pedro arrives and asks about Claudio.

Benedick tells Don Pedro that, in fact, he has saddened Claudio by informing him what was rumoured. He tells that he found Claudio

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as melancholy as a game keeper's hut in a warren. In fact, he had told Claudio that the prince, *i.e.*, Don Pedro has earned the good-will of his lady-love Hero. Benedick says ironically that he asked Claudio to accompany him to a willow tree, either to help him in making a garland of willow leaves for him (Claudio) to mourn the desertion of Hero, or to whip him by means of a birch rod made of several twigs bound up together. Benedick means to imply that Claudio should be whipped for having committed the blunder of talking about Hero to Don Pedro.

(*16*) *She speaks.....follows her.* (*II, i, 220-230*) (*Imp.*)

These words have been taken from the speech of Benedick in Act II, Scene i of Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing*. Don Pedro tells Benedick that Beatrice is furious over what her dancing partner told her about what Benedick had said about her. At this Benedick reveals that he was the dancing partner and Beatrice misused him past the endurance of a block. Out of his disgust, he says that even an oak tree seemingly dead to the world and almost without green leaves would have returned abuse for abuse. He recounts the abuses, such as a prince's jester, more dull than the thaw, etc., used for her. He says that Beatrice's jests followed one after another with such swiftness that he felt himself like a man shot at with deadly weapons.

Expressing his views about Beatrice, Benedick says that she speaks like daggers whose every word stabs. He further says that if her breath were as horribly foul as her invective, there would be no living in the same world where she lives. Her infection would extend as far as the North Star. Therefore, even if she had all the qualities, wealth and happiness, which Adam had in the garden of Eden, he would not marry Beatrice as she was such a shrew. Benedick also tells that her taunting words are so bitter that even Hercules would have been defeated and enslaved by her. A termagent shrew like her would have broken his club into pieces to make fire with. She is Ate, the goddess of war herself, come straight from hell, though dressed in good clothes. Benedick wishes that some scholar who is also an exorcist, would drive out the wicked spirit that has possessed Beatrice. Benedick goes to the extent of saying that to live in hell would be as comfortable as to live in a sanctuary, compared to living where Beatrice is, and people will sin on purpose in order to escape her that way, and live rather quietly in hell where living conditions will be bearable as long as she does not go there with all her disorder and agitation.

There is dramatic irony in the words of Benedick, for ultimately he marries Beatrice, in spite of all his protestations against her.

(*17*) *There's little.....laughing.* (*II, i, 303-306*) (*Imp*).

This speech of Leonato occurs in Act II Scene i of Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing*. Beatrice is full of mirth in all her talk which sparkles with flashes of wit. Don Pedro is highly impressed by her gay nature. He remarks humorously that Beatrice's silence

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offends others and that she must have been born in a merry hour. He calls her a pleasant-spirited lady.

Leonato upholds the views of Don Pedro about Beatrice. He says that there is little of sadness in her nature. She is never melancholy for a long time even in her sleep, and even in her sleep she is not sad. Leonato means to say that even when Beatrice sees a sad dream in her sleep, she is not sad on waking, rather she is sure to burst into laughter. Often Hero has said that she is so little given to sadness that even in her dreams she laughs away unhappiness of which she might have dreamed in her sleep.

(*18*) *Disdain.....self-endeared.* (*III, i, 51-56*) (*Imp*).

These words have been taken from the speech of Hero in Act III, Scene i of Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing*. Hero plans to arouse feelings of love in the heart of Beatrice for Benedick. For this she instructs Ursula to praise Benedick whenever his name is mentioned. Hero's talk will be how sick in love with Beatrice Benedick is. When Beatrice enters, observed by Hero, the two girls begin their deception. Ursula asks Hero if she is sure that Benedick truly loves Beatrice. Hero tells that it is certain because the prince and Claudio told her.

With a view to enable Beatrice overhear her remarks, Hero says that Nature never fashioned a woman's heart of prouder stuff than that of Beatrice. In her eyes there are always disdain and scorn. Her eyes are in the habit of undervaluing what they look on and she holds her wit in such high regard that all other things seem petty and insignificant to her. In fact, she is so much in love with herself that she cannot love anybody, nor accept any form of affection.

Hero means to say that Beatrice is one of the freaks of nature, the like of which is rarely found combining, as she does, the pride of her wit and her sarcastic tongue.

(*19*) *O ! She would.....tickling.* (*III, i, 75-80*)

These words have been extracted from the speech of Hero in Act III Scene i of Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing*. Talking about the nature of Beatrice, Hero is of the opinion that Beatrice is in the habit of undervaluing others. Therefore, she suggests Ursula not to tell Beatrice about the depth of Benedick's love for her, as her nature is too proud, disdainful, and besides, she would turn even good qualities to appear as bad as possible. It is her nature to misconstrue a man and abuse him. Her nature is so curst that honesty and nobility can never be appreciated by her.

When Ursula says that tendency of fault-finding is not commendable, Hero replies that nobody would have the courage to tell this to Beatrice. If she at all does, Beatrice would scoff at her. She would make her look foolish with her ridicule and crush her to death by the heavy weight of raillery. In other words, Hero means to say that if Hero told Beatrice about Benedick's love, Beatrice would silence her by her mockery. Therefore, Hero suggests that it would be better if Benedick is consumed by his sighs of secret love. Hero thinks that it

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is better that Benedick dies of secret love than that he dies of Beatrice's scorn, disdain and mockery.

In fact, Hero is afraid of the fact that if she disclosed Benedick's love to Beatrice, he would be exposed to further mockery of Beatrice.

About the phrase 'press me to death', Mason observes : "The allusion is to an ancient punishment of our law, called *peine forte et dure*, which was formerly inflicted on those persons, who, being indicted, refused to plead. In consequence of their silence, they were pressed to death by a heavy weight laid upon their stomachs".

(20) *Contempt.....reportingly.* (*III, i, 110-117*) (*Imp.*)

These words have been extracted from the speech of Beatrice in the end of Act III, Scene i of Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing*. When Beatrice is hiding herself, Hero and Ursula talk contemptuously about the proud and vain nature of Beatrice. Ursula also remarks that Benedick is a 'rare gentleman'. Hero also agrees that Benedick is 'the only man of Italy'. Ursula playfully asks Hero when she will be married, and Hero answers every day, after tomorrow. As they leave, the two girls swear that Beatrice has been caught like a bird.

After Hero and Ursula have gone, Beatrice comes out of her hiding-place a complete convert. She is so full of indignation that for the first time in her life, she sees herself as others see her. Therefore, she bids good-bye to her pride and contempt. She realises that no good repute is to be won by those who are contemptuous and scornful of others. She immediately decides that a contemptuous maiden's reputation is far from glorious. She, therefore, vows to let her wild heart be tamed by Benedick's loving hand. In fact, she now believes that Benedick is a most deserving man. Addressing Benedick in his absence, she implores him to go on loving her ; for now, her kindness shall encourage him to join their marriage in the holy bond of marriage. She proclaims that now she believes in his deserts more firmly than ordinary hearsay.

The imagery in the passage is noteworthy. Earlier Beatrice's spirits have been described as disdainful and 'wild/As haggerds of the rock'. But in conclusion, Beatrice caps the image by her subdued behaviour. The image is of a wild creature tamed by the 'loving hand of its nature.

(21) *O ! What authority.....modesty.* (*IV, i, 34-41*) (*Imp.*)

These words have been extracted from the speech of Claudio in Act IV, Scene i of Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing* Don John and his accomplices have poisoned the mind of Claudio towards Hero. Therefore, he denounces Hero in the church just before marriage. When Leonato offers his daughter to Count Claudio, the latter rejects her, saying that she is a 'rotten orange'. She is only a sign and outward appearance of her virtue. Claudio says that her blushes are signs of guilt, not of innocence.

Claudio is so much 'shocked' at the character of Hero that he exclaims that cunning sin should hide itself with such authority and show of truth. He asks the people present if her blushes do not serve

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as evidence of her modesty and simple virtue. He tells them that she appeared a maiden by her exterior show. But in fact, she is not a maiden. She is an adultress, as she has enjoyed the heat of an unlawful sex relation. Therefore, her blush is that of guilty, not of modesty.

This speech of Claudio is dramatically significant in that it presents the turning point of the play. A melodramatic effect is produced and a darker tone has been introduced by the dramatist through the attitude of Claudio.

(22) You seem.....sensuality. (IV, i, 56-60).

This speech of Claudio occurs in Act IV, Scene i of Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing*. At the altar in the church, Claudio accuses Hero of adultery. He refuses to accept her in marriage. Hero is struck dumb and cannot answer the charge. Leonato thinks that perhaps Claudso has already taken her virginity and is now accusing her of being unchaste. But Claudio says that he did not show any sign of levity or lust in his conduct.

When Hero says that she also showed the same type of behaviour towards him, Claudio calls her a blot on maidenly sincerity. He says that he will proclaim in writing that although she seems to him quite chaste as Diana herself, or as pure as the bud before it has blossomed. But, in fact, she is more lustful in her blood than even Venus or those pampered animals that rage in savage sensuality.

(23) O ! Hero.....gracious. (IV, i, 99-107) (Imp.)

This speech of Claudio occurs in Act IV, Scene i of Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing*. At the altar in the church, Claudio accuses Hero of Adultery. He refuses to accept her in marriage, Leonato feels that it is Claudio himself who has violated the virginity of Hero. But Claudio denies it and says that Hero herself is unchaste. As a proof, Claudio says that he along with Don Pedro had noticed her talking to a man at her window in the mid-night. Therefore, Don Pedro and Don John also charge her of immoral conduct.

Claudio wonders at Hero's fairness and foulness at the same time. He says that she would have been of great character, if but half her outward excellence had been transferred to her thoughts and the feelings of her heart. In other words, Claudio means to say that Hero could have been a great woman if she had been equally graceful in her conduct as she is in appearance. However, he bids her farewell, calling her most foul within and most fair without. Having been profited from his bitter experience, Claudio would never afterwards persuade himself to fall in love again. He would never be able to look upon beauty without suspicion and without thoughts of evil. Henceforth female virtues would never look gracious to him.

(24) O ! she is.....tainted flesh. (IV, i, 139-143) (Imp).

These words have been extracted from the speech of Leonato in Act IV, Scene i of Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing*. When Hero is accused of unchastity by Claudio, Leonato is so deeply grieved that he wishes for Hero's death. He cries out that she has

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brought shame upon him and her family and that he is sorry he had loved her so dearly and took pride in her.

Deeply injured in heart, old gentleman, Leonato, laments the degradation of the character of his daughter Hero, after her repudiation by Claudio. It seems to him as if she has fallen into a pit of ink which has so blackened her character irretrievably beyond any possibility of purification. She has become a victim of black contamination. The wide ocean will fail to wash away the stain or the blot on her character. All the salt in the sea would hardly be sufficient to keep her flesh from decay.

This reminds of the famous line from *Macbeth* : "Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood clean from my hand ?"

(25) Is he not.....market-place. (IV, i, 299-304).

This speech of Beatrice occurs in Act IV, Scene i of Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing*. Beatrice is very much bitter against Claudio. She is furious over his slandering Hero in public. In the meantime, Beartrice declares her love for Benedick, and asks him to kill Claudio but he declines to do so. Benedick asks Beatrice if Claudio is her enemy.

Beatrice puts a counter-question if Claudio is not proved to be the greatest villain who has slandered, scorned and dishonoured her cousin Hero. She wishes she were a man so that she could challenge Claudio to a duel. Claudio has been a villain, for he has deluded Hero with the false show of love untill the time they were about to marry, and then he accused her publicly, hurling open slander and unrestrained bitterness on her. She again wishes that she were a man so that she would have eaten Claudio's heart in the market-place.

(26) O ! that.....grieving. (IV, i, 312-319) (Imp.)

This speech of Beatrice occurs in Act IV Scene i of Shakespeare's 'Much Ado About Nothing'. Beatrice expresses her anger towards Claudio for the infamy brought by him on the head of her cousin Hero. She asks Benedick to kill Claudio, but he hesitates, for Claudio is his friend. So Beatrice wishes that she were a man so that she might herself take revenge upon Claudio.

Beatrice wishes that she were a man herself for Claudio, or that she had a friend who would act on her behalf to take revenge upon Claudio. But she bewails the fact that real manhood has disappeared from this world. All that is left is a mere show of love, courtesy and gallantry. Men have grown flatterers. Manliness has turned into nimbleness of wit. She further states that only those persons are considered valiant like Hercules who can speak lies and swear about their truthfulness. Since, her wish to be a man is not going to be fulfilled, she will die a woman with grief.

(27) No, no.....advertisement. (V, i, 27-32) (Imp.)

These lines have been taken from the speech of Leonato in

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Act V, Scene i of Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing*. Antonio tries to convince Leonato to curtail his anger at Claudio's denunciation of Hero. But Leonato is not to be reasoned with. He asks Antonio to keep his counsels to himself, for he cannot have patience in the face of such a calamity as he has suffered. He also says that only those who have not suffered themselves offer such precepts.

Leonato is so grieved in his heart that he cannot relish any counsels of patience. He says that only those persons preach patience who have not suffered from sorrow themselves. All men may presume to advise patience to those who writhe under the weight of sorrow, but no man is strong or patient enough to moralise in this manner, when he has to suffer similarly. Therefore, Leonato cannot be reconciled to any such philosophy. He does not need any advice, for his grief cries louder than any moral exhortation.

(28) *I will be.....sufferance*. (*V, i, 34-38*). (*Imp*).

These words have been extracted from the speech of Leonato in Act V, Scene i of Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing*. Leonato is so deeply hurt in his heart at Claudio's denunciation of Hero, that he is not ready to relish any counsel of patience. He says that only those people preach patience who have not suffered from sorrows themselves. His grief is greater than any moral exhortation. At this his brother Antonio chides Leonato that he is like a child crying so loudly that he cannot hear moral instructions from any quarter.

Talking to Antonio, Leonato says that after all he is a mortal human being. In his sorrow he is giving way to natural feelings and not pretending to be above them like philosophers. But, he says that even a philosopher would feel the pain of tooth-ache, in spite of the fact that they have written in exalted language about the transitoriness of misfortunes and sufferings. Leonato means to say that even the wisest of philosophers, full of wise laws and sententious utterances who affect superiority to human weakness, are unable to bear a mild pain. Therefore, how can he, who is a mere ordinary human being, bear such a great pain ?

The contempt for pain which the philosophers pretended to feel, is satirized here.

(29) *I mean.....terms*. (*V, ii, 26-35*).

This is a soliloquy which occurs in Act V, Scene ii of Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing*. Benedick by now has developed deep love for Beatrice. When he meets Margaret in Leonato's garden, he asks her to tell Beatrice that he wishes to talk to her. After a witty exchange, Margaret leaves to see Beatrice. Benedick tries to sing a love song he has composed, but is unable to complete it because it is so trite.

In a soliloquy, Benedick states that he cannot compose love poems. God only knows that he is a very poor singer. No other lover had to turn over and over to such a degree as Benedick himself. Leander had to swim hard to meet his beloved, Troilus was to employ

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the first messenger in love. These and other carpet-knights are still celebrated in many a heroic poem. Benedick means to say that though unable to express his love in rhyme, he is more in love than all those lovers whose names are celebrated in heroic poems. Benedick finds it extremely difficult to find proper rhymes in his love poems. For example, he finds no other rhyme for 'lady' except 'baby' which is a very ineffective rhyme; for 'scorn' except 'horn' which is a hard rhyme reminding him of cuckoldry, for 'school' except 'fool' which is a prattling sort of rhyme. All these are very inauspicious rhymes. He realises, therefore, that he was not born under the influence of the planet which endows a person with poetic inspiration. He should be after all content that he cannot express his love in poetry.

(*30*) *But Jove.....bleat.* (*V, iv, 48-51*). (*Imp*).

This speech of Benedick occurs in Act V, Scene iv of Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing*. After the establishment of Hero's innocence, all the concerned persons feel happy and relieved. As the time of the arrival of Claudio and the prince is drawing near, Leonato asks the ladies to withdraw into a chamber and to come back in masks. When Claudio and Don Pedro arrive, they ask Benedick as to why he is looking gloomy. Claudio retorts that perhaps he is thinking of his marriage and consequently of his being made a cuckold by his wife.

Benedick feels offended and angry at the remark of Claudio, who has transferred his love from Hero to a strange girl whom he has so far not seen, at the bidding of Leonato in order to expiate the wrong done by him to Hero. Hence, he says to Claudio that Jove, as a bull, had an amiable voice, and some such strange bull leapt over his (Claudio's) father's cow and got a calf in that very noble feat and the calf made a bleat in the same manner as he did.

'Bull Jove' refers to a mythological story that Jupiter changed himself into a bull to carry off Europa, the daughter of Phoenix.

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QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q. 1. What is the major theme of *Much Ado About Nothing* ?

Or

Q. 2. What do you consider to have gained from the study of the play *Much Ado About Nothing* ?

Or

Q. 3. Bring out the theme of appearance verses reality in *Much Ado About Nothing.*

Or

Q. 4. Discuss *Much Ado About Nothing* as a play of Deception and Delusion.

Ans. Shakespearean critics have too often entertained themselves with speculations as to the specific moral thesis or purpose or some central theme of his plays and have spun theories. But it should always be remembered that Shakespeare was never a doctrinaire setting some moral lesson, although some sort of moral lesson in a work of art cannot be ruled out. So far *Much Ado About Nothing* is concerned, it has a number of themes.

The main theme of the play seems to be concerned with appearance verses reality, truth as opposed to falsehood. One arrives at this conclusion because the device of eavesdropping is used throughout the play for all three sets of characters—the Hero-Claudio tragicomedy, the Beatrice-Benedick love story and the tribulations of Dogberry and crew. Most of the overheard discussions or scenes are really deceptions. The eavesdroppers in these cases really believe what they are seeing or hearing is true. Even the main action of the play is predicted on a deception. Furthermore, the means of resolving the dilemma caused by Don John's villainous plot is brought about by another overheard conversation and the final portion of the play is devoted to yet an additional major deception (the 'death' of Hero and Claudio's belief he is marrying Leonato's niece). Therefore, it is evident that some of the characters in the play are quick to seize upon half-truths and to allow themselves to be misled as a result.

Another theme subsidiary to the theme stated above is the theme of moderation. This theme is exemplified by the Benedick Beatrice story. It is derived from the actions of Beatrice and Benedick who,

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unlike Claudio, Leonato, Don Pedro, and Antonio, desire to re-educate their sense of values and amend their faults. Beatrice and Benedick quickly fall in love with each other. After a short period of conventional behaviour expected of lovers, consisting in behaviour such as affectations in dress, manners and speech, as well as love-sickness, jealousy and pettiness, they decide to abandon all pretence and act in a normal fashion. It seems, therefore, that human feelings expressed through moderate, reasoned channels of behaviour are more natural and meaningful. This is especially true if we contrast the behaviour patterns of Beatrice and Benedick with those of Claudio. Claudio's code of honour is extreme. His rashness results in near tragedy, whereas Beatrice and Benedick, through their acceptance of moderation, find a path of happiness much sooner than Claudio.

Note—See also *Introduction to the Play*—'The Theme of the Play'.

Q. 5. Discuss the various features of the play that reveal Shakespeare's point of view.

Ans. Shakespeare is an artist who keeps himself aloof from his dramas. But still there are certain features, some problems that certainly offer a suggestion of Shakespeare's point of view. He often approaches his material with the idea of undercutting the major characters and their actions in the play. This he does in order to show their hollowness or the vain notions which such characters represent.

In *Much Ado About Nothing*, Shakespeare wishes to show the emptiness of courtly morality and the artificial humanity it imposes upon its adherents. Therefore, first we find Claudio depicted as a very conventional youngman who requires economic advancement as a pre-requisite to his getting married. Hero is also shown as the conveniently obedient daughter of a high-ranking public official. Besides them is Don John whose paper-tiger villainy is continually offset by a group of bumbling oafs.

Contrasted to this set of characters are Benedick and Beatrice. They have their feet firm on the realities of life. Then, Shakespeare takes great care to provide plenty of melodrama in the very scenes in which the conventional characters are supposed to be in dead earnest. This occurs especially when Claudio denounces Hero and leaves in tears after Hero faints. Leonato quickly follows up Claudio's rash behaviour by his unfatherly attitude toward his own daughter. This is followed in Act V, Scene i, with an outrageous scene of blustering and ranting by Leonato and Antonio. Shakespeare purposely creates the picture of two older men insulting Don Pedro and Claudio and challenging them to duels. It is made melodramatic by the bluster but ludicrous when we remember that Hero is not dead and Leonato is mostly angry because of the slur Don Pedro and Claudio have put upon his family name.

The third feature of the point of view is the mock-heroic treatment given to the dramatic high points of the play. In this pattern

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Shakespeare's bent of satire is seen. The whole affair, denunciation of Hero by Claudio, Antonio and Leonato encountering Don Pedro and Claudio and the scene when Leonato is 'forced' to hold his brother in check-all these present a ludicrous impression. Claudio's first visit to Hero's family monument is in itself a comical mock-heroic effort at reproducing a genuine elegy or lament. The deflation is complete when Claudio states :

> Now unto thy bones good night !
> Yearly will I do this rite.

Then the ludicrous reaches its climax at the end of the play when Claudio is married to "The former Hero ! Hero that is dead !" Thus Shakespeare uses various elements to heigh ten dramatic effect but they certainly reveal the dramatist's point of view in one way or the other.

Q. 6. What are the improbabilities and inconsistencies in the plot of *Much Ado About Nothing* ?

Ans. *Much Ado About Nothing* is a romantic comedy in which Shakespeare has observed the unities of time, place and action. Its structure depends almost entirely on one central theme, his main motive, *i.e.*, if a man's temperament be normal, man must always be susceptible to the joy of being beloved by surrendering his intellect to the emotion of love. But many over-fastidious critics have found faults with the play on account of many discrepancies and improbabilities in the plot or inconsistencies in the line of its characters which are no doubt true to some extent. Technically, *Much Ado About Nothing* is the most close-knit of the comedies except for a certain awkwardness about certain episodes. However, let us make a brief excursion into this vexed question of minor improbabilities and inconsistencies found in the play.

The inconsistencies in the play centre round three main points :

(1) The presentation of the character of Claudio, an insufferable and intolerable person ;

(2) The inconsistencies in the character of Margaret ; and

(3) The acceptance of the humiliated girl, Hero, of Claudio as her husband—the man who defamed his lady-love (betrothed) in the public at the very altar, thereby producing a most harrowing scene.

The presentation of the character of Claudio does not conform to the canons of dramatic art and is perhaps without a parallel elsewhere in Shakespeare. It is quite strange that Shakespeare thinks it fit to let such a freekish monster as Claudio to get away with Hero as his prize. Thus the character of Claudio and his marriage with Hero are not consistent with each other.

Likewise, the inconsistency in the character of Margaret is insufferable. The unchastity plot has its own weaknesses. Borachio makes use of Margaret to plot agaist Hero, and, in doing so, makes Margaret call him as Claudio with reasonable loudness. He himself

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calls her as Hero. Normally, when Margaret plays as a fool in the hands of Borachio, she should know the plot itself and the purpose of it, but strangely she appears to know nothing about it, for she makes no mention of it to Hero. This is a striking improbability, because no such interview is possible at midnight without guilty collusion on the part of Margaret.

Pointing out the weaknesses in the plot of *Much Ado About Nothing*, James Spedding writes, "At the end of the First Act, the Prince and Claudio leave the stage (which represents the open space before Leonato's house); the Prince having that moment conceived and disclosed his project of making love to Hero in Claudio's name. Then the scene shifts to a room in Leonato's house, where the first thing we hear is that, in a thick pleached alley in Antonio's orchard, the Prince has been overheard telling Claudio that he loved Hero and meant to acknowledge it that night in a dance, etc. All this is told to us, while the Prince's last words are still ringing in our ears; and it is told, not by the person who overheard the conversation, but by Antonio, to whom he has reported it. We are called on, therefore, to imagine that, while the scene was merely shifting, the Prince and Claudio have had time for a second conversation in Antonio's orchard and that one of Antonio's men, over-hearing it, has had time to tell him of it. Now this is one of the things which it is impossible to imagine. I do not mean merely that the thing is physically impossible, for art is not tied to physical impossibilites. I mean that the impossibility is present so strongly to the imagination that it cannot be overlooked or forgotten. The imagination refuses to be so imposed upon.

Note : See also *Introduction to the Play*—'Improbabilities in the Play'.

Q. 7. Comment upon the mingling of the mood of romantic fantasy and that of tragic relief in *Much Ado About Nothing*.

Or

Q. 8. Discuss the means adopted by Shakespeare to lighten the tragedy of the central theme in *Much Ado About Nothing*.

Or

Q. 9. "In *Much Ado About Nothing* Shakespeare works upon the action to a tragic climax and then resolves it in a manner which is dramatically faulty". Discuss.

Or

Q. 10. "The welding of the comic plot into the serious plot is a masterpiece of constructive skill". Discuss.

Ans. The remarkable feature of Shakespearean comedies is that there is always a tinge of tragedy in them. The undercurrent of the tragic element enhances the gaiety and happiness of Shakespearean

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comedies. In fact, they "lie close to sorrow—close at least to heart-ache". This can be illustrated in his early and late comedies, such as (1) in *comedy of Errors*, we have pathos induced upon plautus, who knew it not ; (2) in *Love's Labour's Lost*, the revelry is overcast with the shadow of death ; (3) in *Twelfth Night*, both Olivia and Viola mourn for their brothers; (4) in *The Merchant of Venice*, Antonio's miserable condition just before the turn of scales. In fact, Shakespeare was a true artist who aimed at portraying life in all its light and shade. Therefore, he has written neither mere 'comedies', nor 'unrelieved tragedies' because he wanted to make his dramas true to life.

Much Ado About Nothing is a fine mixture of the tragic and comic elements. The welding of the comic plot into the serious plot is a masterpiece of Shakespeare's constructive skill. In fact, this comedy treads close upon tragedy. In this play the main plot verges on tragedy. Although there is comic relief by the underplot, it is fact that up to the fourth Act it is a near-tragedy ; at least it is grave and agitating, so much so that one can only expect it would have a natural tragic end.

"There should have been serious atonement for the malicious and wanton insult offered to Hero by Claudio." But not—Shakespeare wanted the play to be a comedy—a true comedy and consequently there is universal reconciliation in the twinkling of an eye. Much happiness in actual life skirts the tragic reliefs in the day-to-day affairs of life. Shakespeare adopts various devices to effect this transformation : (1) From the very first we have a provision 'that before every lie that is uttered we are left in no doubt that it will be detected at long last.' Shakespeare does not spring upon us as a surprise. Before the repudiation scene he presents the arrest of the plotter. This is the tragic relief provided by him when the tragic tension is at its height in the climax of the play. (2) Shakespeare presents Hero and Claudio as passionless lovers. He throws enough comic stuff in the two under-plots to prevent the truning of the play into tragedy or a near-tragedy. Hero and Claudio never come close enough to us for pity or terror to be felt by us in the climax of the Play. Even in the repudiation scene, Shakespeare resolves the tragic tension, by the suggestion of the friar and the confession of love between Beatrice and Benedick against the somewhat sombre background of the catastrophe. By these touches Shakespeare keeps our sympathies in check and makes us more interested in the fate of Beatrice and Benedick, who become finally so important as to bear us all away upon their comic backs. It is the seriousness of the central situation that sheds upon Beatrice and Benedick so much importance.

Critics differ as to the wisdom of this conversion of the tragic climax into a happy ending. They have pointed out that Shakespeare has done this at the expense of certain discrepancies, inconsistencies in the characters of Claudio and Margaret, and other improbabilities, and, as such, it is dramatically faulty. In defence of Shakespeare it may be said that the ultimate marriage of Claudio with Hero, whom he has publicly repudiated at the altar—in itself a doubtfully desirable

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consummation—makes no flaw in the dramatic perception of the drama which could not otherwise have been wound up at all. "This was its one inevitable conclusion, if the action were not to come to a tragic end, which would have been painfully and grossly out of place." Critics are all agreed that Shakepeare's characterisation of Claudio and Margaret cannot be pronounced to be according to the canons of dramatic art, although from the point of view of constructive skill, the welding of the episodes does not appear to be faulty. Indeed "the main elements in the Play are brought into reasonable connection ; rather they are so perfectly dovetailed that the joint is barely visible."

Q. 11. "In *Much Ado About Nothing* the character and incidents that Shakespeare borrowed are less interesting than those he invented". Discuss.

Ans. About *Much Ado About Nothing,* it may safely be said that its main interest lies in characterisation. But the character and incidents that Shakespeare borrowed are less interesting than those he invented. Considered as a drama, the play can scarcely be said to have a plot of its own, but surely it is none the worse for it, for the main interest of a Shakespearean drama lies in its characterisation. We may quote Coleridge's famous declaration : "The interest of the plot is always on account of its characterisation, not *vice versa* as in almost all other writers; the plot is a canvas and no more". If Dogberry and Verges (representing 'low' comedy or clowning introduced to pander to the taste of the groundlings), and Benedick and Beatrice are removed from the play nothing remains. There is almost a bewildering variety of characters but most of them are borrowed elements which are sacrificed in order to sustain our main interest in these four characters invented by Shakespeare. All these borrowed characters, *viz.*, Leonato, Antonio, Hero, Claudio, Don Pedro, etc., are ruthlessly sacrificed to the main interest and used merely to tell a story which can be told in two minutes.

In another famous passage of literary criticism, Coleridge suggests that Dogberry, Verges and the Watch are not indispensable to the plot and that "any other less ingeniously absurd watchmen and night-constables would have answered the mere necessities of the action." We cannot agree with the great Shakespearean critic, Coleridge, about this. We consider that Dogberry's stupidity and the watchmen's foolishness are indeed very essential to the plot and we refuse to accept any substitutes. Dogberry exactly fits into the plot Shakespeare had in hand. It is out of the secrets of dramatic art to conceal the purpose the dramatist has in view while introducing an immortal pair, like Dogberry and Verges, while at the same time sustain our interest in them for their own sake. That Shakespeare was able to throw dust into the eyes of a critic of such eminence as Coleridge as to the dramatic necessity of these grotesque oddities and embodiments of stupendous fatuity, is a tribute to his dramatic workmanship. "From the purely artistic point of view Shakespeare's most original creation in this play is surely Dogber-

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Benedick nor Beatrice but Master Constable Dogberry ably supported by Verges and the Watchmen." The witty encounters of Beatrice and Benedick are brilliant and scintillating no doubt, but there is often a kind of hardness about the brilliance, and our eyes become tired with following the glint of the rapiers.....No boubt we do realise the "even in our wildest dreams, we could never scale those heights of wit. And then come in these two delicious and lovable old stupids, whose humour we can appreciate at leisure who provide the contrast of the opposite pole of the comic and furnish a not unwelcome restorative to our self-conceit, since they allow us to feel, however lowly our estimate of our capacities may be, that there are two of God's creatures who have an alacrity of sinking to depths that even in nightmares we could never plumb." Dogberry and Verges are indeed immortal creations of Shakespeare. Undoubtedly they occupy a prominent place in the portrait gallery of comic characters in world's literature.

Q. 12. "Dogberry and Verges are inimitable specimens of quaint blundering and misprisons of meaning". Discuss.

Or

Q. 13. Write a note on the character of Doberry and Verges and show how far their characters are indispensible to the plot.

Or

Q. 14. How do the lower characters fit in with the main plot of *Much Ado About Nothing* ?

Or

Q. 15. Estimate the contribution of Dogberry and Verges towards the discovery of Don John's crime.

Or

Q. 16. "The blundering Bumbledom of Dogberry and Verges is wrought into the very structive of the plot." Discuss.

Or

Q. 17. Describe the function of Doberry and Watch in the scheme of the play.

Ans. In a romantic comedy, lower characters are assigned important functions. It was perfectly legitimate for the lower characters to bring about the means of a dramatic resolution in such plays. In *Much Ado About Nothing*, in case we should find it improbable that Dogberry would bring Leonato news of Conrade's and Borachio's capture, we should keep in mind that Dogberry is a police official when he asks Leonato to examine the "two aspicious persons", he is dutifully reporting to his superior (the Governor of Messina). We also observe that the lower characters are tied to the main plot line not only by their involvement with Leonato, but also their actions display at least too symbolic analogies to the main actions.

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(1) The device of evesdropping is put to good use by the members of the Watch when they purposely listen to Borachio explaining his villainy to Conrade.

(2) The great emphasis that Dogberry and Verges place upon charging the Watch, holding the examination and conducting their affairs properly reminds as that they are as interested in outer appearances as Claudio and Don Pedro.

About Dogberry and Verges it should be kept in mind that they are not only wept but also rather hard put to make themselves understood by anyone outside of their own environment. We see, therefore, that the lower characters also serve as a modifying influence upon the serious tone of the play. If they are timely in nothing else, they at least show up soon enough to remind us that no matter how serious things look, all will be made well very quickly.

Dogberry is given a very active part in the play. He is, in fact, raised above the level of an ordinary clown. He is allowed to control the resolving factor, i.e., the revelation that Borachio has confessed Don John's evil slander and deception. Symbolically, Dogberry's preoccupation with maintaining the exact formality of his position is analogous to the affectation of position some of the other characters display—Claudio, for example, whose life is ruled by the conventions of the courtly romantic, and Leonato, whose fear of slander is more important at first than his daughter's innocence or feelings.

Note : In addition to the above answer, for Q. 13, see also *Introduction to the Play* 'characters of the play'. For Q. 15 and 17, see the relevant parts of the summary.

Q. 18. *Much Ado About Nothing* contains excellent examples of wit and humour. Discuss.

Or

Q. 19. Consider *Much Ado About Nothing* as a comedy of wit and humour.

Ans. *Much Ado About Nothing* is a comedy of wit par excellence. Wit and humour are the two distinguishing qualities which make for the real pleasure fo the play. In this connection, the views of Hamilton Mabie are noteworthy : "*Much Ado About Nothing* is neither a play of character nor of manners, it is a drama of wit ; everything is subordinate and accessory to the flash and counterflash of the minds of Beatrice and Benedick. The gentle Hero, the credulous Claudio, the villainous Don John, and the inimitable, muddle-headed Dogberry and Verges play their parts in order that the verbal interchange between Beatrice and Benedick may be effectively staged. But the drama of wit, however, brilliantly constructed, cannot have deep rootage or dilate an imagination, such a drama must inevitably seem cold and artificial *Much Ado About Nothing* does move us because it subordinates the interest of the character to the interest of brilliant verbal dexterity. It is the finest product of verbal ingenuity and audacity of Shakespeare's time, legitimate and brilliant example

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of a love of paradox, conceit, and hair-splitting juggling with words affected by the man of wit and fashion in that time and effectively satirised—*Love's Labour's Lost*."

In fact, 'Much Ado About Nothing' is a battle-ground of wits. The main battle faught is between Benedick and Beatrice. In this battle of wits or wit-game, these two characters regard themselves as 'seeded' players. Beatrice regards herself as the only capable person to make witty observations. This is clear in the following conversation between Beatrice and Margaret ;

Beatrice. I'm stuff'd, cousin, I cannot smell.

Margaret. A maid and stuffed ! There's goodly catching of cold.

Beatrice. O, God help me ! God help me ! How long have you profess'd apprehension ?

Beatrice is gifted with a quick witty responsiveness. Her wit has the sparkling swiftness and inexpectedness. Her quick turn for witty exuberance is evident in her conversation with her uncle Leonato. When Leonato asks her, "You might light on a husband that hath no beard", Beatrice flashes back : "What should I do with him ? Dress him in my apparel and make him my waiting-gentle-woman ? He that hath a beard is more than a youth : and he that hath no beard is less than a man ; and he that is more than youth is not for me ; and he that is less than a man, I am not for him, therefore, I will even take sixpence in earnest of the bear-ward, and lead his apes into hell".

Besides the quick repartee and comic inventiveness of Beatrice, Shakespeare has used Dogberry as a source of humour, wit and fun. In fact, Shakespeare's wit in devising the linguistic excesses of Dogberry is the glaring example of the flat and despised 'mere quibble'. Dogberry exaggerates, by accident and in self-satisfied ignorance the processes by which the true wits divert the meanings of words deliberately, knowingly, and with pride in their craft. But the one is the antithesis to the other ; and both sides could be told, "Thou hast frighted the word out of his right sense, so forcible is thy wit". This is largely what makes Dogberry an appropriate figure of fun for a play in which all three plots turn on understandings and mis-understandings ; quite apart from his being a marvel of the official numbskull's capacity to make extreme ado about genuine nothing. Dogberry's malapropisms are never improper. Impropriety in this play is the privilege of the educated, of those who are his betters.

Note : See also *Introduction to the Play*–'Shakespeare's Humour'.

Q. 20. How does the imagery of war or battle reflect upon the theme ? Trace the significance of this imagery in the play.

Ans. The theme of *Much Ado About Nothing*, is largely concerned with conventional behaviour. Hence in the beginning of the play, we find Claudio returning victoriously from the wars. We are

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told that he performed the "feats of a lion" in battle. In keeping with the romantic tradition, he finds a beautiful young girl and desires to marry her. This is the treat which only the brave deserve. However, warfare is not dropped after Claudio's initial entrance.

This warfare is carried further into the play as the "merry war" and 'skirmishes of wit' between Beatrice and Benedick. Beatrice's first remark is a jesting query about Benedick : "I pray you, is Signior Mountanto* returned from the wars or no ?" Beatrice continues talking about Benedick in terms of a love battle, in which he engaged with her when he first arrived in Messina. Whenever they meet "there's a skirmish of wit between them." In fact, this imagery of a 'battle', which has been provided from the very beginning, gives us a sufficient suggestion of the relationship between Beatrice and Benedick. The real interest of the play lies in this skirmish which occupies a good portion of the play.

Besides the imagery of war or battle, there are other subsidiary images which are suggestive of the aforesaid imagery. They are the additional suggestive images of fencing or duelling which refer tangentially to war, especially when Antonio, Leonato and Benedick challenge Claudio at different times within the same scene. Benedick is not in a mood for jesting and he says to Claudio :

"Sir, I shall meet your wit in the career and you charge it against me. I pray, you choose another subject".

Claudio and Don Pedro continue jesting until a challenge is finally given :

Claudio. Nay, then give him another staff. This last was broken cross. (Since Benedick had referred to jousting, Claudio answers that Benedick needs another lance because he ineptly broke his 'staff' on the last 'charge').

Don Pedro. By this light, he changes more and more. I think he be angry indeed.

Claudio. If he be, he knows how to turn his girdle. (Claudio may be referring to a wrestler turning his belt around as the signal to begin).

Benedick. Shall I speak a word in your ear ?

Claudio. God bless me from a challenge !

The literary and courtly tradition considered love-making a kind of combat between the lover and the lady. The lover importunes and tries to attain his desires by every means his wit can devise. The lady, however, remain aloof, giving battle frequently and remaining impervious to the onslaughts of the sighting lover. There is a suggestion of this in the later difficulties between Hero and Claudio and a stronger inference of it in Beatrice and Benedick's romance. In this manner the conventional romantic tradition of a figurative battle

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* Mountanto was a term used for a fencing thrust.

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between the lover and his lady is subtly carried throughout the play by means of suggestion rather than direct statement. The overall suggestiveness created by the imagery of war, battle, fencing, jousting and charging also reinforces the relationship between Beatrice and Benedick, which takes up such a large portion of play.

Q. 21. How far is *Much Ado About Nothing* Italian in spirit and how far English ?

Or

Q. 22. Explain the remark "what is sad in the play is from Italy and what is joyful is from England".

Or

Q. 23. "*Much Ado About Nothing* is the most Italianate Play in the cannon and the closest to the spirit of the Renaissance". Discuss.

Ans. The play occupies a mind-position in long series of play owing their indebtedness to Italian sources and influence. Its main plot is the serious and tragic element in the love story of Hero and Claudio. Much of the story relating to Hero, Claudio and Don John is taken from Italian sources, *viz.*, a novel of Bandello (*Timbreo di Cardona, 1554*) or from the still earlier version of the same story as told by Ariosto in the *Orlando Furioso*, Book V, translated by Harrington in 1591. Other Italian writers, to whom Shakespeare was indebted for his plots are the great Italian writers such as Dante, Petrarch, Tasso and Boccaccio, and the school of followers led by them Shakespeare's dramas for the plots of which he was indebted to this school were *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *The Merchant of Venice* and *The Tempest*. In all these plays, however, like all Elizabethan writers, he has invariably diffused an atmosphere of the 16th century social scene of England, even though the names of the characters are Italian. "In sentiment, in morals, in evil and good passions, in its high honour and villainy, in its scenery and love of war, the play is Italian," while everything about Dogberry, Verges and the Watch—their humour, self-conceit, and glorious incapacity—is English. Shakespeare has so skilfully amalgamated them that the English characters seem to move in the streets of Messina as freely as the Italians themselves.

Note. See also *Interoduction to the Play*—'The Sources of the Play' and 'Atmosphere of the Play'.

Q. 24. Write a note on Shakespeare's idea of comedy with special reference to the Play, *Much Ado About Nothing*.

Ans. See *Introduction to the Play*—"Shakespeare's Contribution to the Play'.

Q. 25. How are the different strands interwoven in the play ?

Or

Q. 26. Comment on the statement that "in *Much Ado About Nothing* the consummate craftsman is seen in the

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handling on the plot". Is not there any 'loose end' in the play ?

Ans. See *Introduction to the Play*—'Construction or Structure of the Play and its Development'.

Q. 27. "Don John is the main spring of the plot of the Play, but he is merely shown and then withdrawn." Discuss.

Or

Q. 28. "Don John is only a smaller edition of Iago". Discuss.

Or

Q. 29. "The Climax of the story of *Much Ado About Nothing* rouses moral indignation on our part not against the villain but against the hero and his friends". Discuss.

Or

Q. 30. "It is Don John's plot, not his brother's which finally unites Beatrice with Benedick". Discuss.

Ans. Don John is "in one sense the most important of the characters, for it is in his machinations the 'much ado' originates. He has been compared to Iago in little, and the villainy of his purpose is hardly inferior. But while the fiendish malice of the former has its motive chiefly in hatred of a rival preferred before him the main spring of the latter's action is rather a general moroseness which sets him at war with all mankind."

Don John's function in the play is to stop the even progress of Claudio's love of Hero only for a temporary period. When this purpose is served, he is withdrawn, as he is not allowed to do any permanent damage to Claudio and Hero. The course of true love on the part of Hero at least is forbidden to run smooth by the machinations of Don John, a thorough-paced villain of the deliberate Machiavellian type dear to the Elizabethan imagination. But for the plot of Don John there would have been no interest in the love story of Hero and Claudio, which would have culminated in their marriage, on the day appointed, and there would have nothing interesting about it, because their union would not have been different from an ordinary marriage. It is Don John's plot that culminates in the tragic repudiation scene, followed by the resolution of the conflict by the Friar's suggestion. But his intention to do permanent damage to Claudio and Hero fails because he relies too much on the drunkard Borachio for the execution of his plot with the result that with the latter's confession, Don John is compelled to flee from Messina to avoid punishment. "Don John's plot affects directly the situation between Claudio and Hero and through this indirectly the situation between Beatrice and Benedick and the discovery of it by Dogberry and Verges affects the one again directly and the other indirectly and is responsible for the final happy ending." In this way all the three episodes are wrought with consummate skill into a varlegated pattern.

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It is Don John's plot, not his brother's which finally unites Benedick and Beatrice. But in spite of its dramatic utility, his plot is shown to be a total failure. Even in the act of his fight from Messina, he gets caught by the custodian of the law. Shakespeare's purpose was to make his plot as a temporary impediment in the way of Hero's marriage. This was necessary to prevent the main action from turning the play from a tragedy or a near-tragedy into a comedy at long last after the plot of Don John has cast its lurid shadow up till the fourth Act when the catastrophe of the repudiation scene is enacted. It is this catastrophe in the church brought about by his plot that really unites Benedick and Beatrice together. "The plot to ruin one match achieves another." It is the rejection of Hero and her public repudiation that arouses generous instincts in the nature of the couple and leads to their confession of love for each other, after which Benedick rushes out with his sword to defend feminine virtue. It is Don John's plot that ultimately brings about a virtual comic Nemesis in the fourth Act.

The Climax of the play also rouses our moral indignation not only against Don John but also against the hero and his associates.

Note : See also Appendix A—"A Note on the Repudiation Scene".

Q. 31 'Both Hero and Beatrice are true types of womanhood'. Discuss.

Or

Q. 32. Institute a comparison and contrast between Hero and Beatrice.

Ans. See *Introduction to the Play*—'Characters of Hero and Beatrice and a Contrast'.

Q. 33. "Beatrice and Benedick have a sympathetic antipathy to each other". Discuss.

Or

Q. 34. Compare and contrast Beatrice and Benedick.

Ans. See *Introduction to the Play*—"Characters of Benedick and Beatrice and their Comparison and Contrast."

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APPENDIX A

A Note on The Repudiation Scene.

[ACT IV, SCENE I]

This scene marks the climax or turning-point of the main plot, all the elements of which are entangled into a compact knot, followed by its resolution or its untying in the intervention of the Friar, who comes to the rescue of Hero at the moment of her repudiation by Claudio by putting forward his view of the matter and making a practical suggestion as to the only course of action left open to Leonato. The tragic tension in the minds of the audience has already been softened by the arrest of Borachio and Conrade (in III, iii) through the introduction of the mechanism of a third under-plot, *i.e.*, the Dogberry-Verges story. It is this which leaves us in no anxiety about the final upshot of the whole affair. This scene with its tugging vicissitudes of passion—its hush of terrible expectation as to the probable fate of Hero—is hardly surpassed in tragic power elsewhere. It is "a great rhetorical set piece rivalling the finest declamatory scenes of *Julius Caesar* and the *Merchant of Venice*. It is a magnificent piece of dramatic writing. Shakespeare has followed his usual practice of lessening the tragic tension by including both the 'climax' and the 'denouement' of the main plot of the play. The action slowly mounts up to our almost tragic height at the tense moment of repudiation of hero by Claudio but as the scene unfolds itself the 'resolution is also started by the suggestion of the friar. The style also rises at once to verse at the moment of tragic intensity until it softens down to a solemn quatrain, at the close where Beatrice and Benedick are drawn together as never before, and the dialogue between them drops down into prose again. This is the second part of the scene in which we have the resolution of the comic under-plot. The way the comic plot is woven into the serious main plot is indeed a marvel of constructive skill of the dramatist. "The plot to ruin one match achieves another, when Beatrice turns to Benedick demanding of the latter—Kill Claudio"—and Benedick also draws his sword to defend feminine virtue, we have what may be called a vertual comic nemesis *in excelsis*.

(See Summary on page 309 for a detailed critical estimate of this Scene.)

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APPENDIX B

Opinions

1. *Much Ado About Nothing* is brilliant, spirited, charged with vivacity and sparkling with wit ; it is a masterpiece of keen characterisation, of flashing conversation, of striking contrasts of type, and of intellectual energy, playing freely and buoyantly against a background of exquisite beauty. The dramatist was now completely emancipated from his earlier teachers and had secured entire command of his own genius and of the resources of comedy as a literary form. In this splendid creation of his happiest mood in his most fortunate years, the prophecy of the sustained and flashing inerchange of wit in Lyly's court plays is amply fulfilled, and the promise of individual power of characterisation clearly discerned in Biron and Rosaline is perfectly realised in Benedick and Beatrice, while Dogberry and Verges mark the perfection of Shakespeare's skill in drawing blundering clowns. In this play, the blending of the tragic and humorous and comic is so happily accomplished that the two contrasting elements flow together in a vital and exquisite harmony of experience, full of tenderness, loyalty, audacity and brilliancy ; the most comprehensive contrast of character is secured in Hero and Cluadio, Benedick and Beatrice, as chief actors in the drama with Dogberry and Verges as centres of interest in the minor or subsidiary plot. Hazlitt declared with reference to this Play that perhaps the middle point of comedy was never more nicely hit, in which the ludicrous blends with the tender, and our follies, turning round against themselves in support of our affections retain nothing but their humanity. In *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, Shakespeare drew with a free hand the large and rather coarse qualities of English middle-class life ; in *Much Ado About Nothing* he presented a study of life in the highest stage of social order, touched at all points with distinction of insight characterisation and taste. The gaiety and brilliance of the great world as contrasted with the little world of rural and provincial society are expressed with confidence and consistency which indicate that the poet must have know something of the court circle and of the accomplished women who moved in it. —*Mabie.*

2. *Much Ado About Nothing* has been called a comedy of self-deception with some justice for Beatrice and Benedick have to discover their own minds, while in the education of Dogberry & Co., among other things the great first lesson 'Know Thyself' has very conspicuously been neglected and that of all forms of a comedy of self-deception most stringently compels the author to be quick in advertising his audience who must be wiser all the time than the persons on the stage. —*Quiller-Couch.*

Pradman Kishor Dhar

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3. But the only great things in the serious part of *Much Ado About Nothing* is Claudio's "silence is the perfectest herald of joy : I were but little happy if I could say how much" ; that, and his praise of music which he shares with so many of Shakespeare's lovers. It is not tragedy or romance which is the genius of *Much Ado*, they are only foil to the comedy, and especially to the loves and humours of Benedick and Beatrice. Those names—the Blesser and the Blest and the like are of Shakespear's giving, and perhaps seem over-beautiful for such humorours personages. But the two are one picture of happiness, and their wit and humanity have blessed thousands of hearers and readers from Shakespeare's day to ours. They sometimes a little recall the Rosaline and Biron of *Love's Labour's Lost*. But Shakespeare has travelled far since those prentice days. How much more grace and amusingness there is in these passages of verbal arms than in those. How much less merely verbal these are, escaping from the dictionary to the spectable of life. How the deadness of quibbles has been replaced by a living humour which plays at ease over the field of human nature, always with a laugh, of course, but neither unthoughtful one nor an unloving. There is all the difference in the world between the cold crackling of cleverality, which is too often the atmosphere of *Love's Labour's Lost*, and the rich warmth which comes when heart and brain join together to feed the fire.

—*John Bailey*.

4. In *Much Ado About Nothing*, Shakespeare writes of the power of report, of the thing overheard, to alter human destiny. Antonio's man listening behind a hedge, overhears Don Pedro telling Claudio that he will woo and win Hero. The report of his eavesdropping conveys no action of truth and leads, no doubt, to a bitter moment for Hero. Borachio, hiding behind the arras, overhears the truth of the matter. The report of his eavesdropping leads to the casting off of Hero at the altar. Don John and Borachio vow to Claudio that they overheard Don Podro making love to hero. The report gives Claudio a bitter moment. Benedick, reporting to the same tune, intensifies his misery.

Benedick overhearing the report of Beatrice's love for him, changes his mind about marriage. Beatrice hearing of Benedick's love for her, changes her mind about men. Claudio hearing Don John's report of Hero, changes his mind about his love. The Watch overhearing Borachio's report of his villainy are able to change the tragedy into comedy. Leonato hearing Claudio's report of Hero, is ready to cast off his child. Report is shown to be stronger than human affection and any acquired quality except the love of one unmarried woman for another, and the strongest of all earthly things, the fool in authority. The wisdom of Shakespeare is greater and more varied than the brains of little men can imagine. —*Masefield*.

5. The reversal in the mutual relation of Benedick and Beatrice is highly interesting in so far as it is probably the first instance of anything like careful character-development which we have as yet encountered in any single play of Shakespeare's. In the earlier comedies

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there was nothing of the kind, and the chronicle plays afforeded on opportunity for it. The characters had simply to be brought into harmony with the given historical events, and in every case Shakespeare held firmly to the character-scheme once laid down. *Neither Richard III* nor *Henry V* presents any history ; born kings, in the plays which take their names from them, are one and the same from first to last.....But this melting of all that is hard and frozen in the natures of Benedick and Beatrice is without a parallel in any earlier work, and is quite plainly executed evermore. And the real substance of the play lies not in the plot from which it takes its name, but in the relation between these two characters freely invested by Shakespeare. —*Brandes.*

6. Benedick's first greeting of Beatrice is as Lady Disdain, and at the masked ball it is his charge against her that she is 'disdainful', and disdain is a complaint that scarcely occurs but to a lover ; hence it is Hero's charge :

> "No, truly, Ursula, she is too disdainful ;
> I know her spirits are as coy and wild
> As haggards of the rock." —III. i. 34-36.

He himself betrays himself, when he places his "simple true judgment" of a lady, in opposition to his "custom as professed tyrant to the sex." When Claudio declares his love to Don Pedro, Benedick brings his own sentiments as to marriage, and turns and engrosses the whole conversation on his proper sentimental idiosyncrasy with little regard for poor Claudio's suspended communication. After a sharp encounter with the lady, he can still indicate a full appreciation of her beauty, "As she were not possessed with a fury" ; and after one still sharper when she drops a word that is almost unpardonable —"the fool will eat no supper," he advances, for advance it is, one step nearer to self-knowledge in averring I would not marry her if— "it matters not what follows, for conditions were indifferent after the thought was once fairly entertained. It is comic and characteristic that the acute, the observant Benedick, never catches a glimpse of the true incitement of the persecution of Beatrice ; he supposes a base or bitter disposition—anything rather than the truth that at heart she thoroughly admires him, and would be pleased and flattered to be admired and attended to in return, and that is a pique and not contemptuousness that arms her tongue. Apparently he has himself, and selfsufficient parade of superiority to love, a divinity who will not be insulted with impunity, to thank for his false and uncomfortable position. Beatrice speaks of a time when they seem to have had more peaceable relations, and he gained a heart of her, though it proved to be with false dice ; indifference, however, is almost as dire a crime or treachery in a court of love, especially in the bachelor, and therefore it is that Benedick suffers most by the mutual persecution and, by the course of his conversation, is justly exposed to far more ridicule than attaches to Beatrice in her recovery, in as much as she, though with irregular weapons, was at least vindicating the natural rights of her beauty and attractions. —*Hood.*

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7. Shakespeare found himself more interested in the character of Benedick and Beatrice than in the main story. They were not dissimilar to the earlier pair of Berowne and Rosaline of *Love's Labour's Lost*, but he handled them more easily, and the thrust and parry of their wit was quicker and more natural. He had learnt the trick of such conversation, and the repartee of two such characters must come quicker even than ordinary talk. There was a good deal of prose in *Henry the Fourth* play, but in this play he experimented further with its possibilities. He schemed the plot so that the mutual declaration of love between Beatrice and Benedick should come at a tragic moment after Hero is repudiated and carried off apparently dead, that scene hitherto was all in verse, rhetorical, emotional, noisy, expressing various emotions. Shakespeare closed it with a stanza of verse, alternately rhymed. Then leaving Benedick and Beatrice alone on the stage he continued in a quiet, vibrant prose.....

He experimented also in the technique of a plot which depended for its effect upon reversal of fortune—a double reversal for first Hero's marriage was turned to disaster and then Claudio's distress to to marriage. This kind of story could be made effective by surprise. If so, every one must be kept in ignorance that Hero was innocent, and that she was really alive after swooning; but such a method needed vast explanations; the resolving of the entanglements of the *Comedy of Errors* took up along scene at the end. The other method was to sacrifice the sacrifices and to keep the audience foreknowing and the character ignorant. It was more effective emotionally. As he plotted the story, everyone knew that Hero would be shamed in the church unless something intervened; and until the very moment of its happening, there was still a chance that Hero would yet be spared, the emotional effect of this kind of irony was far greater than the simpler satisfaction of surprise.

Shakespeare added some low comedy which would appeal to the London audience. Dogberry, Verges and the rest were sober citizens during their duty by the city and serving their turn on the watch. Young gentlemen who walked abroad by night knew well enough the shortcomings and solid obstinacy of a London watch. He added also one daring simile touching on the behaviour of Essex:

> "And bid her steal into the pleached bower,
> Where honey-suckles, ripen'd by the sun,
> Forbid the sun to enter : like favourites,
> Made proud by princes, that advance their pride
> Against that power that bred it." —III, i. 7-11.

—***Harrison.***

8. It is only in ***Much Ado About Nothing*** that the serious story makes any approach to the tone of tragedy. Hero is the victim of a plot as dastardly as Iago's and her very innocence renders her, like Desdemona, more helpless to meet it. She is one of the women whom Shakespeare, who can make womanly wit so irresistably charming, has endowed with silence. The brilliant woman-hater,

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Benedick, is indifferent to her, but the ardent and impulsive Claudio is captivated at first sight, and seeks her hand with the faintest understanding of her heart. The Plighting of these two is, thus, a fragile structure and very feeble strategy suffices to break it down. Don John is perhaps the poorest creature to be found in the whole Shakespearean drama. With the wits of a slender or a simple he combines the restless malignity of a sullen man to whom other people's happiness is an offence. He has not enterprise or energy for down-right crime, but he drives a huckstering business in spoiling intended marriages, and even for this has to rely upon the help of agents with keener brains and shorter purses than himself. The plot succeeds and when Claudio, in the sensational cathedral scene. ignominiously rejects his slandered bride at the altar and Hero's relatives with just indignation threaten his life, a desperate catastrophe appears to impend. In the *Merchant of Venice*, Shylock's knife is already at the breast of his victim before a hint is given of another solution. Here, though the immediate harm done is more grievous the means for its undoing are in full view, and their is subtle stage-craft in the management of two concurrent trains of incidents, in the same place, and partly among the same persons, one of which, if known, could instantly cut short the other. The plot succeeds with Claudio, but almost at the same instant it is discovered by the watch. Had these constables been the equals of these "good men and true", Leonato must have heard of the treachery and the bubble would have burst. But the glorious irrelevance of Dogberry and Verges saves the situation. Leonato on the morning of the wedding, weary of attempting to discover their business, bids them examine the prisoners themselves, and sets out unsuspectingly for the fatal ceremony. Dogberry is thus precisely in vertue of his incapacity. Vital to the economy of the play. The first good Malapropist in our literature, he is steeped in a humour which goes far beyond the aptest mutilation of words.

At the opposite pole of humorous creation is Beatrice, "Queen of dazzling converse", of intellectual wit but also one of Shakespeare's truest and bravest women. Like Benedick she has no part in the original story, and there is but one moment at which she comes vitally into Shakespeare version of it—that at which the great cry, Kill Claudio' flames from her as she faces Benedick's half-hearted inquiry what she wishes him to do. There are depths of soul in Beatrice which we are not permitted to explore. As it is the woman, not the wit, who intervenes in Hero's fortunes, so the woman gets the better of the wit in the charming episode which determines her own. She and Benedick are cheated into troth-plight, so Hero and Claudio are cheated out of it. But her wit was half an accomplice, and when the cheat is discovered, its fruit remains. —*Herford.*

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APPENDIX C

OBJECTIVE QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1. *Much Ado About Nothing* is a
   (a) tragi-comedy (b) comedy of wit (c) tragedy.
2. How many intrigues and deceptions are there in the play ?
   (a) Ten (b) Eight (c) twelve.
3. How Many plots are woven in the action of the play ?
   (a) Two (b) three (c) four.
4. How many pairs of lovers are in the play ?
   (a) four (b) two (c) five.
5. Who is the hero of the play ?
   (a) Benedick (b) Claudio.
6. Who is the heroine of the play ?
   (a) Beatrice (b) Hero.
7. Beatrice is
   (a) Shrewish (b) submissive.
8. Hero is
   (a) meek and submissive (b) arrogant.
9. Beatrice is loved by
   (a) Claudio (b) Benedick (c) Don Pedro.
10. Hero is loved by
    (a) Benedick (b) Claudio (c) Montano.
11. Who is the daughter of Leonato ?
    (a) Hero (b) Beatrice.
12. Who is the governor of Messina ?
    (a) Leonato (b) Don Pedro.
13. Who is praised by the Messenger before Leonato ?
    (a) Benedick (b) Claudio.
14. What is the name of the illegitimate brother of Don Pedro ?
    (a) Don John (b) Claudio (c) Montano.
15. Who speaks of a ruffian at the window of Hero ?
    (a) Claudio (b) Don Pedro.
16. By whom this false story is corroborated ?
    (a) Don Pedro (b) Don John.

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17. What happens to Hero at the accusation ?
(a) She weeps (b) She faints (c) She dies.
18. Who does frame a plan to bring Hero out of shame ?
(a) Benedick (b) Friar (c) Claudio.
19. "My griefs cry louder than advertisement", Who is the speaker of these words ?
(a) Leonato (b) Claudio (c) Benedick.
20. "What my dear Lady Disdain" ! Who is the speaker of these words ?
(a) Don Pedro (b) Benedick (c) Claudio.
21. Who is the 'Lady Disdain' ?
(a) Hero (b) Beatrice.
22. There is "a kind of merry war" between
(a) Benedick and Beatrice (b) Hero and Claudio.
23. "O Hero, what a Hero hadst thou been", who is the speaker of these words ?
(a) Claudio (b) Leonato.
24. "O, she is fallen Into a pit of ink". Who is the speaker of these words.
(a) Leonato (b) Claudio (c) Don Pedro.

Answers

1. (b),	2. (b),	3. (b),	4. (b),	5. (a),	6. (a),
7. (a),	8. (a),	9. (b),	10. (b),	11. (a),	12. (a),
13. (b),	14. (a),	15. (b),	16. (b),	17. (b),	18. (b),
19. (a),	20. (b),	21. (b),	22. (a),	23. (a),	24. (a).

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APPENDIX D

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Dated 4/11/2015

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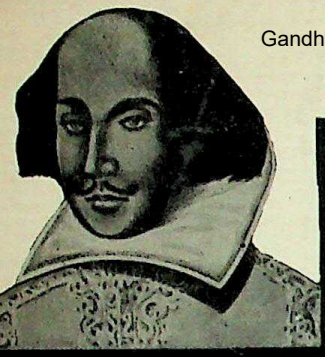

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